PATTERNS OF POWER · THE DUTCH IN JAVA

The Dutch in Java

The Complete Study · 1619 — 1755 — 1870

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with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

Held as tested, not revealed.

A case study in the Patterns of Power series.
Primary sources quoted exactly; modern scholarship paraphrased and credited.
Contested figures given as ranges. Nothing reconstructed from memory.

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Preface and Outline

Front matter · how this study was made, the disciplines it holds itself to, and a map of its thirteen parts

The collaboration

This is a case study in the Patterns of Power series, applying the series' framework to the Dutch presence in Java, from the burning of Jayakarta at the end of May 1619 to the Agrarian and Sugar Laws of 1870. The framework is a lens for reading how any order of power is founded, dressed and held: the floor of force beneath every order, the robe of doctrine laid over the floor to make the force cheap, the settlement that divides the spoils among the armed, the cost column in which each subject prices compliance, the formation that installs a person's cast of authorities before he can weigh them, the seam that keeps what is said at the centre from meeting what is done at the edge, the default by which an elite coordinates without instruction — and, running through all of it, position logic: the proposition that rulers in like positions converge on like solutions, because a position poses a problem with only a few good answers.

Java was chosen to test the findings of this collection's study of the East India Company in Bengal, and it turned out to be the sharpest available control, because it holds the instrument constant and varies almost everything else. Two chartered companies of the same century, both licensed by a European state, both trading in tropical produce, both drawn into sovereignty by the logic of their own contracts, both eventually taken over. And underneath, three variables the Bengal case could not separate.

The first is what the conquered order leaves behind. Bengal handed its conqueror an office — the *diwani*, a real Mughal position with a patent, a treasury and a staff, whose authority attached to the post rather than to the man, so that a foreign company could obtain a grant of it and operate machinery already built. Java handed its conqueror nothing of the kind. Mataram's lords held revocable assignments of other men's labour, granted at a king's pleasure, recorded in no register a stranger could read, renewed by attendance at court and by marriage. There was no patent to buy and no department whose keys could change hands. So this study is the collection's case of a conquest that had to *manufacture* the office it needed, and the interesting question became what it paid for it.

The second is the shape of the apex. Both companies had freely traded shares. In London the share carried a vote in a general court that could overturn its own directors, and the vote carried patronage over a subcontinent. In Amsterdam the share carried a claim on a distribution and nothing else — no meeting, no audit, no removal. That single difference in the founding instrument turns out to explain why the conduct of one company became the permanent business of a national legislature and the conduct of the other went unexamined for a hundred and ninety-seven years, and it obliged this study to revise what the collection had concluded about liquid apexes.

The third is the unit. Mughal Bengal assessed a cash demand on measured ground; Mataram counted *cacah*, households of labour. A ruler who counts acres is counting something that cannot run away; a ruler who counts households is counting the thing he can lose. Almost every divergence in this study — the form of the settlement, the shape of the extraction, the availability of exit, the impossibility of the accounting — follows from that.

The study was built the way the series is built, one module at a time. The author brought the framework, the direction and the judgement of the whole, and held the collaboration to its disciplines; Claude, Anthropic's model, did the research — verifying load-bearing quotations, dates and figures by search against sources reproducing the primary text before any module was written — and produced the drafts, each presented and confirmed before the next was begun. Where the research contradicted the framework's expectation, the research was followed and the expectation revised. The framework is scaffolding and a lens, not a cage, and several of this study's better findings are corrections to what it had predicted.

The method

The engine is the method of information asymmetry: the exact public words set beside the exact words of the ground, the arithmetic laid out, and the sum left to the reader. The charter of 1602 declaring that the welfare of the United Netherlands consists principally in navigation and trade, beside Coen's memorandum of 1614 explaining that trade cannot be maintained without war nor war without trade. A dying Susuhunan ceding his realm in December 1749 *uyt eygene vrye en onbedwongene wil* — of his own free and unconstrained will — beside the editor's note that beside the seal stood some characters set down in his own hand, because he was too ill to sign. A sultan at Giyanti receiving half a kingdom *als eene singuliere gunst*, as a singular favour, beside the article three clauses later requiring every man who holds any authority in his uplands to come to a Dutch port and swear an oath before a Dutch governor.

But this case forced two refinements of the method and both are worth flagging in front matter, because they recur.

The first is that in an order which extracts through intermediaries, the gap the method looks for is frequently not between what was said and what was done but between what was said and *what was never recorded at all*. There is no private despatch in which anyone in Batavia admits what the coffee quota cost the villages of the Priangan, because nobody in Batavia knew. The arrangement was built not to generate the information, and the not-generating was the saving that made it profitable. Concealment presupposes that somebody knows. This order mostly ran on the other thing.

The second is that the seam here is not principally a seam between metropole and colony. It is a seam between the point where a demand is made and the point where it is decided — and the man making the demand at the door of a Javanese cultivator was a Javanese, speaking Javanese, exercising an authority older than the Company. The study spends a good deal of its length on why that arrangement made a European justification unnecessary.

The disciplines

Quotation. Public-domain primary sources are quoted exactly, in the original language with a translation, at the length the argument needs: the preamble and eight articles of the *octrooi* of 20 March 1602; Article 10 of the Mataram contract of 11 November 1743, ceding six hundred rods of land along the sea and along every river that runs into it, around the whole of Java; the deed of cession of 11 December 1749 and the bond executed by the crown prince three days later; the first three articles of the treaty of Giyanti of 13 February 1755; the dedication of Grotius's *Mare Liberum*; and from Multatuli's *Max Havelaar*, the coffee broker of Lauriergracht 37, the coffee- and sugar-machines that are called natives, and the question put to William the Third. Modern copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased, briefly, and credited. All translations from the Dutch are the collaboration's own.

No fabrication. No quotation, date, attribution or figure is invented or reconstructed from memory. What could not be verified is dropped or flagged, never guessed, and this study flags a great deal. Coen's 1614 memorandum reaches these pages through a modern scholar's citation of Colenbrander and the edition itself has not been seen. The eyewitness account of the executions at Banda is quoted in an English rendering whose Dutch original has not been consulted, and a Dutch line reported from an anonymous eyewitness is given as reported rather than as verified. The treaty texts are quoted from optical character recognition of a scan of Stapel's

printed edition, with obvious scanning errors silently corrected and the fact stated. *Max Havelaar* is quoted from the author's restored text of 1875 and 1881, not from the censored first edition of 1860 — which matters unusually much, since the difference between those editions is the subject of one of the modules.

Ranges, not numbers. Contested figures are given as spans and the reason for the span is stated. This case has a great many. The population of Java is the worst number in the study and no figure is adopted anywhere in it. The transfers from the Indies to the Netherlands between 1830 and 1877 are disputed by a factor of about three, and the dispute is definitional rather than arithmetical. The Banda casualties do not reconcile with one another. The Java War figures are given in incompatible sets. And for four decades of warfare across the most densely settled countryside in Southeast Asia — Trunajaya's rebellion and the three Javanese wars of succession — this study found no mortality figures at all, and says so rather than estimating.

Gravity without partisanship. Suffering is held with gravity and the study refuses both flattery and demonisation. Its watchword is that legibility is not pardon: to understand how a thing was done is not to forgive its being done. Equally, naming an origin as built is not a debunking — the Islam and the shadow plays and the calendar that the Javanese defended in 1825 had all been brought to Java by identifiable people for identifiable reasons, and had become, entirely and without irony, the country's own world.

Contribution. Every module returns a refinement to the framework, stated plainly in its closing section, rather than merely applying the framework to the case.

Held as tested, not revealed. The pattern is treated as something discovered and tested against the evidence, not handed down as doctrine — a tendency, never a law, corrected wherever the record refuses it.

What the Dutch in Java added to the framework

Because this is the collection's case of a conquest that found no office to enter, offered its subjects no justification whatever, bought its compliance through men whose legitimacy it had not built, and never measured what it took, it isolated mechanisms that the better-documented conquests obscure.

Chief among the refinements: that a conqueror does not always meet a finished order, and may arrive in the middle of a naturalisation still being performed — Sultan Agung decreed the calendar that fused Java's Indic and Islamic layers in 1633, fourteen years after Batavia was founded, and it is the calendar of Java today. That what generates a market in military labour is a *cash* military fiscal system in the previous order, so that a country which pays its soldiers in assignments of other men's labour

offers a newcomer with silver nothing to bid into. That a floor with no local recruiting ground assembles itself out of the human residue of its own earlier operations, which makes each further conquest look cheaper on the books than it was. That where the decisive military advantage is logistical rather than tactical, the floor's reach is the reach of the supply line, and the order will be driven to buy on paper exactly the ground its floor could not hold. That where the incumbent order leaves no enterable office the conqueror must manufacture one, and the currency he manufactures it with is security of tenure — which is the one thing the native sovereign structurally cannot sell, because the revocability of his nobles' positions is what his power consists of. That an instrument and its acceptance are separable, so that a deed conveying a whole kingdom may transfer nothing but a claim. That the robe is addressed to whoever holds the power of revocation, and where the licensor, the funder and the fighter are different parties, only the first of them gets a story. That a commissioned justification is a brief and should be read for what it was retained to defeat rather than for what it appears to affirm. That the strongest formative instruments are the ones nobody experiences as instruction — a grammar that will not let a child speak without stating his rank, a calendar that decides what kind of person he is — and that a conqueror can suppress an institution but not a grammar. That political division and formative division are different operations, so that an order which has split a kingdom three ways has not touched the thing that will produce its enemy. That where a ruling group declines to form the ruled while depending on them for its domestic life, formation does not stop but reverses. That exit constrains a ruler only where it leads somewhere different, so the efficient move is not to raise the wall but to buy the neighbours. That an order extracting through intermediaries exports its resentment along with its costs and thereby loses the ability to read its own danger. That legitimacy is required at the point of demand rather than at the top of the chain, so an order can run cheaply for centuries on a legitimacy it has not built and does not understand. That the chartered form caps extraction rather than enabling it, because a body obliged to book its takings as commerce must pay something, so the transition from company to state is not a moderation but the removal of a ceiling. That a protection is voided by reclassification rather than repeal, and the diagnostic is a guarantee that stands intact and never bites. That the residue of a factional fight is not necessarily liberty, and can be pure restriction where nobody in the winning coalition needed the affected group's standing. That in a colony three of the four ways an order can crack are located in another hemisphere. That a failed rising is not a neutral event but a mechanism by which extraction ratchets upward. That a humanitarian reform can be the fracture, because the mechanism runs on the reallocation and not on the motive. That where an order raises carrying capacity

it writes a metabolic note rather than paying one, and the note falls due in the hands of whoever is standing there. That the forgetting takes a specific and checkable form — the conqueror's instruments reclassified as the conquered's tradition, by the conqueror, and then defended as tradition by the conquered. And that liquidity is not what determines whether an apex defends its arrangement: voice is, because voice is what makes exit unattractive, and a share stripped of its vote does not weaken an owner's attachment but abolishes him as a political being.

The arc

A landscape opening and twelve modules, each with a framework function and its own evocative title.

Landscape — the two orders on the eve. The Year Counted from Nowhere. Two conquests in one year, 1619; a port renamed three times in ninety-four years and finally named after a tribe extinct for thirteen centuries; a calendar that counts from no event at all; a kingdom that measured its lords' wealth in households rather than acres; and a charter under which the owners of the world's first joint-stock company could not vote, inspect the books, or remove a director.

1 — The Floor of Force. They Cannot Pursue Us There with Their Ships. A founding rescued by a quarrel among its besiegers; an army assembled out of desperate Germans and the survivors of the Company's own earlier conquests; the Javanese rated by their conquerors the least martial of the peoples available; and a fortress that held in 1629 not because its soldiers were better but because it could be fed from the sea while its besieger's granaries could be burned from it.

2 — The Settlement. Six Hundred Rods from the Sea. A treaty acquiring a permanent option over the entire perimeter of an island, drawn to the exact depth a ship's boat could reach; a dying king ceding his realm of his own free and unconstrained will; his son swearing, before he may be proclaimed, that it comes to him not by bequest, inheritance or birth; and the office the Company had to build because Java had not left one — paid for in the heritability no Javanese sovereign could sell.

3 — The Robe. To the Princes and Free Peoples of the Christian World. A charter with no religion in it at all; a legal case for the freedom of the seas, bought from a lawyer of twenty-one and published anonymously at a truce negotiation, by a company that would build the most closed trade in the world; a duty of conserving public religion that arrives in 1622, at renewal; and not one word offered to any Javanese below the rank of a regent in two hundred and fifty years.

4 — Formation. A Mosque and a Surau at Tegalrejo. What actually reached a Javanese child — a grammar that would not let him speak without marking his rank, the day of his birth in a thirty-five-day cycle, the shadow play, and a village teacher maintained on tax-free land the Javanese state had endowed; why the Company built nothing against it; and the one population it did form, which was its own, and which it formed Asian.

5 — The Cost Column. Ampun Tuwan, My Family Is Poor. A peasant at a tollgate with two coins of annual margin; an exit that was never closed and was made pointless by buying every district he could walk to; a demand that never came from a Dutchman; and the tollgates burned by men who hired bandits to do it, thirteen months before a war nobody in Batavia saw coming.

6 — Extraction. The Favourable Balance. A company that paid eighteen per cent for two centuries and died insolvent; a Governor-General who raised no rate and changed what the land rent was payable in; a pipeline running from a village head to an Amsterdam auction with the King of the Netherlands holding shares in the carrier; and a sum known to the guilder at one end of the pipe and, in principle rather than for want of research, unknowable at the other.

7 — Information and Suppression. The Coffee and Sugar Machines. A set of books nobody opened for a hundred and ninety-seven years in a republic that could not suppress Spinoza; a seam that failed not because anyone confessed but because a constitution was revised in The Hague for domestic reasons; a preventive censorship regulation issued in the colony eight years later; and a book whose own publisher struck out the dates and the names, leaving everything that moved and nothing that could be checked.

8 — Elite Coordination and the Default. Forty Shares in the Opium Society. A Governor-General holding forty shares in the body that took his employer's opium monopoly; servants who defended their positions magnificently and the Company not at all; a massacred community that came back within a generation and took the franchises again; and a coalition that broke not because anyone withdrew but because the centre grew rich enough to stop paying it.

9 — Plurality or Foreclosure. A Measure, Not a Punishment. Banishment without charge or court, kept clear of the law by being called a measure rather than a punishment; a protection graduated by birth in the colonial constitution itself; a petition attempted once, in 1848, at the cost of the petitioner's career; the first accountability of a colonial governor arising from a private feud; and the liberty the Javanese cultivator actually had, which was exit, and which this order abolished without forbidding.

10 — Change and Collapse. Repay the Advances. Five changes of apex in twenty-one years, every one decided in Europe; a reform meant to protect the cultivator that defunded the only men who could fight; two risings that both ended with more being taken; and a system built because the Netherlands was near insolvency after the secession of Belgium.

11 — The Grim Accounting. For Every Thousand Called Up. What the sword took, with the largest entries missing because nobody counted; the only measurable link between the arrangement and mortality, which is a rate and not a total; a population that multiplied under an order that was simultaneously killing it; a metabolic note written and not called; and the mechanism by which a conquest disappears into the furniture.

12 — Convergence and Divergence. The Company Nobody Bought. Three chartered conquests and three endings — a redemption on written terms, a purchase voted in the Commons, and a receivership; what a vote does to a shareholder that mere liquidity does not; and the strongest case for the defence, stated in full and answered without flinching, including the argument that more Javanese were alive in 1870 than had ever been alive on that island before.

A note on sources.

This front matter is descriptive and makes no primary-source claim of its own; every quotation, date and figure it refers to is sourced and caveated in the module where it appears, and the closing note of each module states what that module could and could not verify.

Three defects should be declared in front rather than left in the body.

The first and largest is that **no Javanese-language source has been read in the original for any part of this study**. The *Babad Diponegoro*, the *Serat Centhini*, and the court chronicles of Surakarta and Yogyakarta are where the questions this study could not answer would be answered — what the regents thought they were doing, what was said in the villages in the Company's name, what a Javanese of 1750 believed about the men in the castle at Batavia. Every conclusion here about Javanese motive is an inference from structure and from Dutch records, and is flagged as such where it is made.

The second is that the *octrooi* of 1602 is quoted throughout from the text François Valentijn printed in 1724, in which he modernised the language and supplied the article numbers himself. Scans of the original are held by the Nationaal Archief and the passages should be collated against them. The statement that the charter contains no

religious language is a statement about Valentijn's rendering, corroborated independently by the specialist literature but not verified against the manuscript.

The third is structural. The study was built in English against sources available in English and Dutch on the open web. It has not consulted the Company archive, the *Koloniaal Verslag* series, the cultivation reports, the records of the Netherlands Trading Society, or the Dutch parliamentary *Handelingen* directly. Where a figure derives from those bodies it derives from the modern scholarship that has worked through them, and is credited to that scholarship rather than to the record.

LANDSCAPE

The Year Counted from Nowhere

Landscape — the two orders on the eve: an island whose rulers reckoned their wealth in households rather than acres, and a company whose owners could not vote, inspect the books, or remove a director.

Two conquests in one year

In the last days of May 1619 a fleet under Jan Pieterszoon Coen came back from the Moluccas to the mouth of the Ciliwung, broke a siege that had nearly ended the Dutch presence in western Java, burned the town of Jayakarta to the ground and drove out its inhabitants. The sources differ by a day or two over whether to date the event to the twenty-eighth, the twenty-ninth or the thirtieth, which is the ordinary condition of this evidence and is recorded here rather than resolved. Coen had something in the region of a thousand men and sixteen ships. What he destroyed was a port of a few thousand people belonging to a sultanate whose army had, four months earlier, arrived in the same place with two or three thousand men of its own and deposed its ruler.

In the same year, four hundred miles east, Sultan Agung of Mataram took Tuban — one of the oldest and richest cities on the north coast of Java, a port that had been trading with China and Gujarat for centuries. It was the fifth or sixth campaign of a war he had begun in 1614 against Surabaya and would not finish until 1625, by which time most of central and eastern Java, and Madura, would answer to a single inland court that had not existed within the memory of a man's grandfather.

Both of these are conquests. Only one of them is filed under that word in the literature that this study has to work through, and the asymmetry is not an accident of the evidence. It is what happens when one conquest is performed by a party that keeps books in a European language and the other by a party whose chronicles are dynastic poetry. The whole method of this study is to set the exact words of one shore beside the exact words of the other and let the distance stand; and the first thing that has to be established, before any of that can be done honestly, is that the Company did not arrive in a country at rest. It arrived in the middle of somebody else's war of unification, and it took its capital from a sultanate that had itself taken that port from somebody else ninety-two years earlier.

The port had been renamed before

The place Coen burned was called Jayakarta because a Javanese army had named it that after storming it.

Before 1527 it was Sunda Kalapa, the principal harbour of the Sunda kingdom of west Java, a Hindu polity whose pepper the Portuguese wanted badly enough that in 1522 the Sundanese king concluded a treaty with a captain sent from Malacca, granting the Portuguese leave to build a fort and undertaking a tribute of pepper, and a stone marker — a *padrão* — was set up on the shore to commemorate it. The Portuguese then delayed. In 1527 a commander in the service of the sultan of Demak, remembered as Fatahillah, took Banten and then Sunda Kalapa itself, on 22 June by the conventional date, with something in the order of fifteen hundred men. He renamed the port Jayakarta, a word of Sanskrit derivation meaning a deed of victory, and it passed to the new sultanate of Banten. The same movement destroyed the Sunda kingdom's inland capital within a few years, and the sultan of Demak's forces were at the same period finishing off the remnant of Majapahit in the east and carrying its heirlooms back to Demak to be kept as the regalia of the new house.

So the ground on which Coen built his castle had been taken by force, cleared of one religion's ruling apparatus and given another's, and renamed, within living memory of the great-grandfathers of the men then alive. What survived the burning of 1619, on the standard accounts, was the Portuguese stone.

The Company's directors then named the new town after a tribe that had been extinct for thirteen centuries. Coen wanted to call it Nieuw-Hoorn, after the town in North Holland where he was born, and the Seventeen overruled him; the naming ceremony was held on 18 January 1621, and the name was Batavia, after the Batavi of the Rhine delta, whom Tacitus records as a people allied to Rome and exempt from tribute. Nine years earlier, in 1610, Hugo Grotius had published a treatise arguing from Tacitus that those Batavians had possessed a free constitution of their own, that the Dutch were their heirs, and that the country had therefore never lawfully been subject to arbitrary monarchy — a pedigree manufactured to justify a revolt against Spain, and, as of January 1621, the name of a fortified town on a Javanese river built on the ruins of a Javanese town built on the ruins of a Sundanese one.

There is no need to make anything of that beyond what it plainly is. Three orders in ninety-four years renamed the same square mile after the thing each of them held to be its own origin, and the third one's origin was sixteen hundred years old and had been discovered by a lawyer eleven years earlier.

The layers, and how far down the built thing goes

Begin at the bottom, because that is where the durability was and because none of it belonged to any court then standing.

A Javanese in 1619 reckoned his year on the Saka era, which counts from 78 of the Christian reckoning and came to Java from India. The literature he heard recited, the shadow-play whose figures he knew from childhood, the vocabulary in which his rulers were addressed — all of it carried an Indic layer laid down over centuries by kingdoms culminating in Majapahit, whose court described in the fourteenth century a realm of subordinate lords owing tribute and service to a sacred centre. That layer had itself arrived: nobody in Java was born reckoning in Saka years until somebody brought the reckoning and it took.

Over it came Islam, and it came through the ports rather than behind an army. The earliest conclusive evidence of Muslims among the Javanese is a group of gravestones near Trowulan, close to the Majapahit capital, dated to 1368 and 1369. A Chinese observer travelling the north coast in the early fifteenth century describes no established Muslim presence there. A century later, when Tomé Pires saw the same coast for the Portuguese in the 1510s and 1520s, Islamic states were in place in the trading towns of the *pasisir* — Gresik, Tuban, Demak — mostly under lords of foreign Muslim descent who had married into and adopted the manners of the Hindu-Buddhist Javanese aristocracy, and were thereby becoming Javanese. The conversion of Java did not run from a centre outward; it ran from the harbours inward, carried by the men who handled the trade, and it took two centuries.

Then the direction reversed. Demak, the strongest of the coastal sultanates, destroyed Majapahit in the 1520s; and within two generations power had swung back off the coast to the interior, first to Pajang and then, from about 1587, to a house established at Kotagede in the old Mataram heartland of south-central Java by a man remembered as Senapati. His grandson was Sultan Agung. And that inland court — the court whose armies were taking Tuban in the year Batavia was founded — was, in the judgement of the historian M. C. Ricklefs, still very imperfectly Islamised: its literary traditions, its rituals and its calendar remained substantially Hindu-Buddhist in character.

Which brings us to the object this module is named for, and it is worth stating in numbers because the numbers are the whole point.

On 8 July 1633 — a Friday, and in the Javanese five-day week a Friday *Legi* — Sultan Agung abolished the Saka calendar in his territories and replaced it with one that took its months from the Islamic lunar reckoning. He did not adopt the Islamic year-count. He kept the Saka number. The Saka year then running was 1555; the Islamic year then

beginning was 1043; and the first day of the new Javanese year was declared to be 1 Sura 1555, which was also 1 Muharram 1043. The months thereafter bore Javanese renderings of the Arabic names — Sura, Sapar, Mulud — and the year advanced at the lunar rate. The effect, which nobody appears to have intended and which is nonetheless exact, is that the Javanese year has since counted from no event whatever. It is not measured from the epoch of the Saka era, because it stopped keeping that era's solar length in 1633; and it is not measured from the Hijra, because it did not adopt that number. It is an Indian count carried forward inside an Arabian frame by a Javanese conqueror who was, in that same decade, fighting a European corporation on his own coast.

Two things must be said about this and then held for the rest of the study.

The first is the discipline. Naming a thing's conquered origin is not debunking it. The Saka year, the shadow-play, the shrine, the Friday prayer and the sultan's title were every one of them brought to Java by identifiable people for identifiable reasons, and every one of them had become, by any measure that matters, genuinely and unironically the country's own world — defended in the nineteenth century by men who would have been astonished to hear them called constructions, and correctly so, because a thing that was built and then took is a more durable object than a lie could ever be. Nothing in this study turns on the native order having been in some sense artificial. The opposite: it turns on how completely it was not.

The second is narrower and it is the fact the whole case rests on. The order the Company met was cheap. It ran on its own subjects' conviction, needed no garrison to maintain the conviction, and cost its rulers, at the level of belief, essentially nothing. The order that would eventually displace it never got there, in two and a half centuries, and was still paying for its quiet with force and surveillance in 1870.

And there is a third thing, which is not a discipline but a correction to the usual picture, and it is the reason for the emphasis on the date. Sultan Agung's calendar was decreed in 1633. Batavia had by then been standing for fourteen years, and the Company had already fought and survived two Mataram sieges of it. The naturalised order this conquest fell upon was not a finished object. It was still being assembled, in public, by a living architect, in the same decade — and the assembling was being done partly in response to the same pressures that had brought the Dutch. A conqueror does not always arrive after the settling is complete. Sometimes he arrives in the middle of it, and becomes one of the conditions the builders are building against.

What the apparatus was made of, and what unit it counted in

Above the village stood the layer that delivered the surplus, and its central fact has to be got right because everything downstream depends on it: Mataram did not measure land.

The kingdom was arranged in concentric rings. At the centre sat the *kuthagara*, the walled capital and court. Around it lay the *negara agung*, the core provinces, close enough to be administered directly and containing the assignments of the great men who actually lived at court. Beyond that were the *mancanagara*, the outer provinces east and west, held by lords who came in to the capital to make their submission at fixed intervals. And along the north coast lay the *pasisir* — the old trading sultanates, Demak, Jepara, Tuban, Gresik, Surabaya, conquered one after another and thereafter governed as a subordinate ring, their harbours and their shipping the kingdom's window on the outside world and the part of it that a maritime power could most easily reach.

Land within these rings fell into three kinds. There was *narawita*, worked directly for the court's own consumption. There was *perdikan*, village land carrying a mosque, a tomb or a religious establishment, held free of the state's demand and assigned to religious functionaries. And there was *lungguh*, the apanage: land assigned to a noble or an officeholder in lieu of a salary, from which he drew his income and his labour and out of which he was expected to maintain himself, his household and the men he owed.

The apanage was not measured in acres. It was measured in *cacah* — households — and the specialist literature glosses one *cacah* as the family unit needed to work a given ground, conventionally reckoned at around four adult men. A prince or a great officer did not hold a stated area; he held a stated number of peasant families, and his standing in the kingdom was that number. A royal census of 1651 is reported to have recorded a total of about five hundred thousand *cacah*, and when the kingdom was partitioned between two courts in 1755 the division was made, on Ricklefs's finding, not from any new survey but from older conventionalised *cacah* figures inherited from the previous century.

Hold that, because it is the single most consequential fact in this landscape and it will decide the shape of every instrument the Europeans later wrote. In the Mughal provinces the state assessed a cash demand on measured ground and kept the registers in Persian; a conqueror who took that machine took a survey, an accounting vocabulary and a hierarchy of revenue officers, and could operate it without understanding the country at all. In Java there was no such machine to take. There was an assignment of people, expressed in a unit that counted labour, distributed by a king

to men whose right to it lapsed when his favour did, in a countryside nobody had surveyed and where nobody had any reason to.

Three consequences follow immediately and each of them will need its own module.

The wealth of Java, from the ruler's side, was labour. Not rent, not a share of a measured crop, but the days of men — to fight, to build, to carry, to plant the fields attached to an assignment. Any order that wanted what Java produced would have to reach labour, and the instruments for reaching labour are not the instruments for reaching land.

The religious establishment was already endowed and already exempt. *Perdikan* is a state grant of permanent tax-freedom to the men who taught, prayed and kept the tombs, made by the Javanese state, long before any European had a view about it. Whoever later declined to build schools in Java was not leaving a vacancy. He was leaving a funded, landed, self-reproducing formation apparatus in undisturbed possession of the field.

And nothing in the arrangement was a heritable estate. An apanage was a revocable assignment of other people's labour, held at the centre's pleasure, and a conqueror who wanted to bind the men holding one could not confirm them in a property, because there was no property to confirm.

Whether there was a seat

Every conquest in this collection turns on one early question: did the previous order leave a coordination point a stranger can capture and operate, or did it leave none, so that the newcomer must build his collaborators himself and pay for them in force? Bengal answered yes, and answered it in the plainest possible way, because the revenue half of a Mughal province was an office with a patent, a treasury and a staff, and its occupant's authority came from an instrument rather than from his blood.

Java's answer is not that, and the honest statement of it is that the research so far supports a different shape rather than a different verdict, and the settlement module will have to establish it properly.

What Mataram had at its apex was not an office. It was a person, to whom other persons submitted, and the submission was renewed by physical attendance at court, by the acceptance of a title conferred there, and very frequently by marriage into or out of the royal house. The *bupati* of a coastal district held his position because the susuhunan had confirmed him in it and because his family had held it before; the assignment that maintained him could be enlarged, cut or transferred; and there was no register in which the arrangement was written down in a form a stranger could read,

because the record that mattered was the memory of a court. A newcomer could not sit down in that. He could be given a treaty.

Which is precisely what happened, over and over, for a hundred and fifty years, and it is why the settlement in this case is not a land instrument at all but a series of contracts with princes — with Mataram, with Banten, and after the partition of 1755 with the two courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta — under which the Company took delivery obligations, exemptions, and coastal districts, and left the government where it lay. A contract with a prince is a very different object from a patent to an office. A patent runs to whoever holds it. A contract runs to the man who signed it, and has to be renewed, at a price, every time he dies.

The floor Java already had

The last thing to establish on this shore is what the island could put in the field, because the Company's first century in Java was conducted in the shadow of it.

Mataram raised its armies the way it paid its officials: through the apanage. A man holding the labour of a stated number of households owed the centre men when the centre called, and the campaign season ran between harvests. This produced very large forces and it produced them slowly, and it tied the size of an army to the agricultural calendar in a way that a besieging force operating four hundred miles from its granaries would discover the hard way. The eleven-year reduction of Surabaya was won not by a battle but by the systematic conquest of the towns that fed it — Lasem, Pasuruan, Tuban, and finally the rice of Madura in 1624 — after which the city surrendered.

Whether Java also contained the other thing, a deep and liquid market in military labour that an outsider with money could simply bid into, is the question the floor module has to answer and this landscape will not pre-empt. What can be recorded here is that the Company did not behave as though it had found one. Batavia was garrisoned with Europeans shipped eighteen thousand miles, supplemented by soldiers and slaves bought or seized from Ambon, Bali, Sulawesi, Madura and the Malabar coast; Coen's expedition to Banda two years later included Japanese mercenaries; and the Javanese were, from the town's foundation, discouraged and then effectively barred from settling in it, on the frank ground that the Company did not intend to be outnumbered in its own capital by the people whose country it was. A conqueror who imports his floor by sea and then legislates the natives out of his own city has not found a labour market. He has found a problem and is buying his way around it.

The other shore, and what kind of licence this was

Cross to the northern shore, and the question is not why the Dutch went to Asia — the Republic's own story is written elsewhere and is not rebuilt here — but what kind of instrument they went with, because the instrument decides nearly everything that follows.

The charter granted by the States-General on 20 March 1602 is a public document and its articles repay reading slowly. The text used here is the one François Valentijn printed in 1724, in which he modernised the language of 1602 and added the article numbers himself; the chain is named because it matters, and the wording should be checked against the original manuscript before any clause is leaned on harder than this module leans on it.

Article II establishes the governing body and does so as an exercise in arithmetic. Whenever a general assembly is needed it is to consist of seventeen persons: eight from Amsterdam, four from Zeeland, two from the Maas chambers and two from North Holland — *"wel verstaande, dat de zeventiende persoon by beurten van die van Zeeland, Maaze ende Noordholland, zal werden in de Vergadering gebragt"*, the seventeenth person to be brought into the assembly by turns from Zeeland, the Maas and North Holland. Amsterdam supplied about half the capital and was given exactly one seat short of a majority, with the deciding seat rotating permanently out of its reach. Article VI then provides that where the assembly cannot agree on a weighty matter, *"dat het zelve zal gelaaten worden tot onze verklaring ende decisie"* — the thing shall be left to our declaration and decision. Ours being the States-General's.

Article X opens the subscription to everybody: *"Alle ingezetenen van deze Landen zullen mogen in deze Compagnie participeren met zoo weinig ende veel penningen, als het hen gelieven zal"* — all inhabitants of these lands may participate in this Company with as little and as much money as they please. Article XVII states what a participant gets: *"Als 'er van de retouren 5 ten 100. in kasse zal wezen, zal men aan de Participanten uitdeeling doen"* — when five per cent of the returns is in the cash-box, a distribution shall be made to the participants. That is the whole of the shareholder's position in the constitution: he may put in what he likes and he shall be paid when there is money. He is nowhere given a meeting, a vote, a right of inspection, or any means of removing anybody.

Article XXVI says who does the removing and appointing. When a director dies or leaves the service, the remaining directors of his chamber are to nominate three suitable persons and present them *"de Heeren Staaten van de Provintie, daar het Collegie resideert, of den genen, by henluiden daar toe te committeren"* — to the States of the province in which the chamber sits, or to whomever they delegate for the purpose —

for one of the three to be chosen. The board nominates; a provincial assembly, or in practice the town regency it delegated to, chooses; and the owners of the capital are not mentioned.

Article XXXIV grants the monopoly: for twenty-one years nobody out of the United Provinces may sail east of the Cape of Good Hope or through the Straits of Magellan on pain of forfeiting ship and goods.

And Article XXXV is the sovereignty. Those of the Company may, east of the Cape and in and through the Straits, make undertakings and contracts with princes and potentates *"op den naam van de Staaten Generaal van de vereenigde Nederlanden"* — in the name of the States-General of the United Netherlands — and build fortresses and defences there, and appoint governors, soldiers, officers of justice and other necessary servants, *"behoudelyk dat de voorsz gouverneurs, officiers, volk van justitie, en volk van oorlog, zullen eed van getrouwigheid doen aan de Staaten Generaal, ofte de Hooge Overigheid voorsz, ende aan de Compagnie, zoo veel de nering ende traffycque aangaat"* — provided that the said governors, officers, men of justice and men of war shall swear an oath of fidelity to the States-General, or the aforesaid High Authority, and to the Company, so far as concerns trade and traffic. The Company may dismiss them if they behave badly; it may not prevent them coming home to lay their complaints before the States-General; and it is bound, on every return of its ships, to inform the States-General which governors and officers it has appointed, so that their commissions may be approved and confirmed.

Read that clause slowly, because it fixes the shape of the whole enterprise. The treaties are made in somebody else's name. The soldiers' oath runs to the state first and to the Company only as far as the business goes. The governors' commissions are reported home for confirmation. This is not a delegation of sovereignty to a corporation; it is a corporation licensed to exercise a sovereignty that remains, on the face of the document, the Republic's. Whether it worked that way in Java is a different question and the study will have to answer it. What can be said now is that the instrument was drafted by people who intended to keep the name.

Finally, Article XLIV: in recognition of the charter the Company is to pay the States-General twenty-five thousand pounds, which the States-General does not pocket but *"inleggen in de equipagie van de eerste 10 jaaren ende rekening"* — puts into the fitting-out of the first ten years and its account — to bear profit and risk like any other participant. The licensor took a stake in its own licensee on the day it issued the licence.

Who could end it

Which allows the question this landscape exists to pose, and it does not have the answer the English case had.

In London the licensor was a single body with a single instrument. Parliament had, by the settlement of 1708 and 1709, pledged the East India Company's monopoly against a national debt with a stated price and a stated notice period, so that when the abolition eventually came a century and a half later nobody had to invent an authority to carry it out; the redemption clause had been written at the outset and the removal was a transaction on terms agreed in advance.

In the Republic there is no such single hand. The States-General granted the *octrooi*, holds the reversion, decides deadlocks under Article VI, receives the oath of the Company's soldiers and confirms the commissions of its governors — and is itself a body of delegates from seven provinces voting under instruction. The provincial States, or the town regencies acting for them, choose the directors from the chambers' own shortlists, which means the power to appoint sits in a different building from the power to revoke. The six chambers are the pre-merger companies preserved intact, each holding its own capital, ships and warehouses and each staffed by men who also sat in the town councils that supplied the appointing authority. And the participants hold a claim on a distribution.

Ask, of each of these, the standing question about what a man loses if the arrangement ends, and four different answers come back, which is a different situation from four men giving the same one. That divergence is offered here as a prediction rather than a finding: an order whose licence is held by several bodies with different powers should be expected to address its justification to more than one of them, and should not be expected to end the way an order with a single redemption clause ends. The modules on the robe and on collapse will test it.

The exit that was promised and not given

One more clause, and it is the one that turns out to matter most for the question of what kind of apex this was.

Article VII fixes the union at twenty-one years, *"mits dat men t'elken 10 jaaren een generaal slot van rekening zal maaken, ende zal elk een t'einde die jaaren vrystaan, te mogen daar uitscheiden, ende zyn geld na hem nemen"* — provided that every ten years a general closing of accounts shall be made, and at the end of those years each man shall be free to withdraw and take his money with him.

The Company therefore did not begin with a permanent capital. It began with a promise of a general reckoning in 1612 and an exit for anyone who wanted one.

The reckoning did not happen. On 24 January 1609 Isaac Le Maire, a former director and the largest single subscriber, addressed a remonstrance to the Advocate of Holland attacking the management: too few ships sent, money borrowed to cover losses, the charter underused, the directors enriching themselves at the expense of the investors and refusing to hear complaints — and, specifically, manoeuvring to merge the first ten-year account into the second so that shareholders could not withdraw in 1612 as the charter allowed. The letter circulated widely. In 1622, when the charter came up for renewal, a group of participants petitioned the States-General for a proper audit. They did not get one. The Company's books remained closed for the whole hundred and ninety-seven years of its existence.

So the world's first freely and continuously traded corporate share was not designed. It was what appeared in the space where a promised legal exit should have been. A man who had put money in and could not get it out, and could not compel an account, could still sell his position to somebody else on the Amsterdam exchange — and the liquidity of that market, which economic history rightly treats as a founding event, is from the participant's side the substitute for a right he had been given in writing and was not given in fact.

This changes the question the case was brought in to answer. It is not enough to ask what a purely financial apex does to an order built underneath it. One has first to ask why the stake became purely financial, and the answer here is that the governance was withheld and then the exit was withheld, and what remained was a price.

Coen's arithmetic

The last thing on this shore is a document, because the man who founded Batavia had written the logic of the place five years before he built it.

On 1 January 1614, from Bantam, still only director-general and not yet governor-general, Coen sent the Seventeen a long memorandum on the state of the Dutch enterprise in the Indies. Its most-quoted sentence is worth having in full, because the full sentence is an argument and the fragment is only a slogan:

> *"Per experientie behoorden de heeren wel bekent te wesen, dat in Indien den handel gedreven ende gemainteneert moet worden onder beschuttinge ende faveur van U eygene wapenen, ende dat de wapenen gevoert moeten werden van de proffyten, die met den handel zijn genietende, in voegen dat den handel sonder d'oorloge, noch d'oorloge sonder den handel nyet gemainteneert connen werden."*

By experience the gentlemen ought to be well aware that in the Indies trade must be driven and maintained under the protection and favour of your own weapons, and that the weapons must be paid for out of the profits which are enjoyed from the trade — so that trade cannot be maintained without war, nor war without trade.

That is not a defence of violence and it is not a confession. It is a financing structure. The soldiers are an operating cost of the commerce; the commerce is the revenue line that pays the soldiers; and the two are locked together such that neither can be reduced without reducing the other. Everything this study will later have to reconstruct — the compulsory deliveries at an administered price, the contracts with princes that convert a war into a territorial cession, the garrison that has to be paid for out of a cargo, the surplus remitted to a European treasury — is already implicit in that sentence, written in a factory on the Java coast by a man of twenty-six, and sent to a board eight months' sailing away.

What each party could see

Set the two shores beside each other and the fields of vision are as important as the forces.

The Seventeen met two or three times a year in whichever chamber was presiding, and read letters that were the better part of a year old. A question and its answer took two sailing seasons. They were not deceived about this and complained about it constantly, and it means that the distance between what was resolved in Amsterdam and what was done at Batavia was not, in the first instance, produced by anybody concealing anything. It was produced by the Cape and the monsoon, and it was in the enterprise from the first voyage.

What a governor-general at Batavia could see was a harbour, a castle, a garrison he could not pay from local revenue, a hinterland he did not administer, and a set of princes whose intentions reached him through interpreters and interested intermediaries. What he could not see was Java: not the interior, not the apanage assignments, not the *cacah* figures, not the courts' own reckoning of who owed whom what. For the first century and a half the Company's picture of the island was a picture of its coast, which is to say a picture of the ring the inland court itself regarded as its periphery.

What the courts could see was one more armed trading party in a harbour, of a kind Java had been dealing with for four hundred years — Chinese, Gujarati, Malay, Portuguese, English — differing from the others chiefly in aggression and in an unusual reluctance to leave. That estimate was correct for a long time and remained correct exactly as long as the decisive question was who held the ports.

And what a peasant in the *negara agung* could see was the man who held the assignment on his household, the demand for labour when it came, the mosque and the tomb on the *perdikan* land at the edge of the village, and the year, counted from nowhere, which had been the year for as long as anyone could remember and had in fact been the year since a Friday in July 1633.

Reading the ground against the framework

Three refinements, offered as the beginning of an argument the later modules will have to earn rather than as findings already made.

First, and this is the one the case may be most useful for: **a conqueror does not always meet a finished order.** The working assumption in this collection has been that the arrangement a conquest falls upon is a former conquest which has already reached the point of running on its subjects' own conviction — the Islamic North Africa of 1830 as the seventh-century Arab conquest naturalised over a millennium, the Bengali year of 1740 as a Mughal fiscal reform that had become simply the year. Java complicates that without refuting it. The Indic layer was indeed a thousand years deep and wholly naturalised. But the Islamic layer over it was two centuries old at the founding, incompletely fused, and visibly still being fused: the ruler who was fighting the Company on his own coast decreed the calendar that reconciled the two layers fourteen years after the Company took his coast, and the decree took, and is the calendar of Java today. So the question to ask of a conquered order is not only how deep it goes but *what stage of the build it is at* — because an order still being assembled has an architect in it who is capable of responding, and a conqueror arriving mid-build may find that his own arrival becomes one of the materials the incumbent builds with.

Second, **the power to license, the power to appoint and the power to revoke can sit in different hands, and where they do, the apex has no single landlord.** The instrument here divides them deliberately: the States-General grants the monopoly, receives the servants' oath, confirms the governors' commissions and decides deadlocks; the provincial States, or the regencies acting for them, choose the directors from lists the board itself draws; the chambers hold the capital and the ships; and the owners hold a claim on a distribution and nothing else. Where a chartered body answers to a single legislature that has written down the price of buying it out, its removal is a transaction on known terms. Where it answers to several bodies with different powers and no such clause, no such transaction is available, and the question of how such an order ends has to be asked afresh rather than assumed. This landscape does not answer it; it establishes that the answer cannot be borrowed.

Third, **before an order can appropriate, it must translate — and the unit is where the translation is performed.** Java's rulers reckoned wealth in *cacah*, households of labour, distributed as revocable assignments in a countryside nobody had surveyed. Every European instrument later applied to that countryside — a land rent, a proprietary title, a tenancy, a quota of acreage — is calibrated to measure ground. An instrument calibrated to ground, applied to an order that counted people, does not simply take a share of what was there; it first has to decide what the thing is, and whatever the old unit measured and the new one cannot is not carried across. The question to put to every settlement in this case is therefore not only what it granted and to whom, but *what unit it counted in and what the previous unit had been counting* — because the gap between the two is where the losses will sit, and they will not appear in either party's accounts, since neither party keeps books in the other's unit.

A note on sources.

The exact primary quotation in this module is from public-domain texts, and two chains need declaring on the page.

The charter of the Company is quoted from the text of the *octrooi* of 20 March 1602 as printed by François Valentijn in *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* (1724): Article II on the composition of the assembly of seventeen and the rotating seventeenth seat; Article VI referring irreconcilable disputes to the States-General's declaration and decision; Article VII on the ten-yearly general closing of accounts and the freedom to withdraw; Article X on participation with as little and as much money as one pleases; Article XVII on distribution when five per cent of the returns is in cash; Article XXVI on the nomination of three names to the provincial States or their delegates; Article XXXIV on the twenty-one-year monopoly east of the Cape; Article XXXV on contracts made in the name of the States-General, the appointment of governors and men of war, the oath of fidelity to the States-General and to the Company so far as trade and traffic are concerned, and the reporting of commissions for approval and confirmation; and Article XLIV on the twenty-five thousand pounds paid for the charter and entered as a participation bearing profit and risk. **Valentijn modernised the Dutch of 1602 and supplied the article numbers himself**, and scans of the original manuscript are held by the Nationaal Archief; the wording used here is Valentijn's rendering and should be collated against the original before any clause is relied on more heavily. All translations from the Dutch are the collaboration's own.

Coen's memorandum of 1 January 1614 is quoted in the original Dutch as it is reproduced, with a citation to volume VI of H. T. Colenbrander's edition of the Coen papers, in the modern scholarly literature on the Company's intra-Asian trade. **The**

Colenbrander edition has not been consulted directly, the passage reaches this study at one remove, and it is load-bearing for the argument; it should be checked against Colenbrander before it is quoted again.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. M. C. Ricklefs for the incomplete Islamisation of the Mataram court in the early seventeenth century, for the finding that the partition of 1755 rested on inherited conventionalised *cacah* figures rather than a fresh survey, and for the general chronology of the Mataram conquests; Soemarsaid Moertono and the Indonesian and Dutch literature deriving from him and from G. P. Rouffaer for the concentric structure of the kingdom, the three classes of land and the apanage system; Peter Boomgaard for Javanese demography; Peter Carey for the agrarian world of south-central Java. The account of the Islamisation of the north coast — the Trowulan gravestones of 1368–69, the silence of the early fifteenth-century Chinese observer, and the established Islamic port states found by Tomé Pires in the 1510s and 1520s — follows the standard accounts; Pires is described rather than quoted, because the standard English translation is under copyright.

Contested figures are given as ranges or with their provenance stated, and several cannot be resolved at all. The date of the fall of Jayakarta is given in the sources as 28, 29 and 30 May 1619 depending on whether the return of the fleet or the destruction of the town is being dated, and all three are recorded here rather than reconciled; Coen's strength of about a thousand men and sixteen ships is the conventional figure. The strength of the Bantenese force sent to Jayakarta in December 1618 is given variously as two to three thousand, and Fatahillah's force at Sunda Kalapa in 1527 as something over fourteen hundred; both are as the accounts report them and neither is a muster roll. **The population of Java in this period is the worst number in the case and no figure is adopted here.** The census of 1651 recording about five hundred thousand *cacah* is a court figure of taxable households and not a population count; Raffles's census of 1815 gives something like four and a half million people; the benchmark reconstruction of Boomgaard and Gooszen puts the population at about seven and a half million in 1800 and thirty million by 1900, and holds the official nineteenth-century returns to have understated by something approaching half at the earlier date. The width of that disagreement is itself a finding about the record and will have to be carried, unresolved, into the accounting.

Two things this module asserts are predictions rather than findings and are flagged as such: that Mataram's coordination was vested in persons and submissions rather than in an enterable office, which the settlement module must establish from the treaties themselves; and that Java contained no deep market in military labour of the kind that made the Bengal conquest cheap, which the floor module must establish

from the Company's own recruitment and pay records rather than from the fact that it imported Europeans, since importing Europeans is consistent with several explanations.

MODULE 1

They Cannot Pursue Us There with Their Ships

Module 1 · The Floor of Force — a founding rescued by a quarrel among its besiegers, an army assembled out of the survivors of its own earlier operations, and a fortress that held because it could be fed from the sea.

The fort that nearly fell

In December 1618 the Company's position in western Java consisted of two warehouses and a half-finished fort on the east bank of the Ciliwung, a garrison of a few hundred men, and a commander in the Moluccas.

The situation had arisen out of an ordinary quarrel about fortification. The Dutch had been strengthening their post at Jayakarta without permission; the prince of Jayakarta, Wijayakrama, objected; and the English, who had their own factory on the other bank and had spent a decade being pushed out of the spice islands by the same Company, saw an opening. Pieter van den Broecke, the senior Dutch officer, was arrested during negotiations along with several others. An English fleet blockaded the river. Jayakartan troops invested the fort by land. Coen, outgunned at sea, had already broken away eastward to gather ships, leaving the fort under Pieter van Raay with instructions to hold.

It very nearly did not. By the early months of 1619 the garrison was negotiating terms, and the terms under discussion were surrender to the English.

What saved it was not a relief force and not a feat of arms. It was the fact that Jayakarta was a vassal, and its overlord had noticed. In late December the *mangkubumi* of Banten, Arya Ranamanggala, sent two or three thousand men down the coast — not to help the prince of Jayakarta but to stop him making a private arrangement with the English on Bantenese ground. On 19 February 1619, during the negotiations, the Bantenese attacked the English, drove them off, arrested Wijayakrama with some fifty of his guards, stripped him of his position and exiled him inland to Tanara, where he later died. Banten then claimed the Dutch fort for itself and told the English to go home. The English packed and went. The siege dissolved into a standoff between parties who now had no agreed object, and Van Raay, who had been on the point of capitulating, repaired his breastworks instead.

Coen came back on 28 May with about a thousand men and sixteen ships, and two days later burned the town.

Set the sequence out plainly, because the founding legend of this order is a legend of decision and force and the record is a record of a quarrel among people who wanted the Dutch gone but wanted different things more. Jayakarta wanted its own port; Banten wanted its vassal's port; the English wanted the Dutch out; and the three of them, between December and February, spent their strength on one another. The Company's foothold in Java survived because its enemies were not one enemy. That is not a criticism of Coen, who exploited it competently and would have lost everything if he had not. It is a statement about what the floor consisted of in the first year, which was almost nothing.

What the floor was made of

The Company had begun sending soldiers on its ships within three years of the charter. The third fleet, under Cornelis Matelieff in 1605, carried two hundred men whose function was purely land warfare — the taking and holding of Portuguese forts — since the ships' guns were worked by the sailors. In August 1606 the Seventeen made it standing policy: fifty soldiers aboard every large ship and ten aboard the yachts. By 1609 the whole military establishment in Asia amounted to five hundred and ninety soldiers holding seven fortified positions.

Immediately after taking Jayakarta, Coen asked for a standing land force. He wanted seven hundred soldiers and three hundred sailors sent to Batavia — in the translation of his despatch, not merely to preserve the place but to keep safe a good part of the surrounding land and to hold the neighbouring kingdoms in check. The three hundred sailors, he explained, were for a small local fleet to trade in Asian waters and to interfere with the Portuguese at Malacca.

That establishment grew slowly. In the years after 1642, when a run of conquests from the Portuguese had left a great many places needing garrisons, the Company was sending something like a thousand soldiers east each year, and by the end of the seventeenth century its total military establishment in Asia had risen to something approaching ten thousand men. The Seventeen already regarded that as a financial burden; Pieter van Dam, the Company's own advocate, wrote at the end of the century that eight thousand two hundred ought to be enough, in what reads as a proposal for economy.

Ten thousand men, spread from the Cape to Nagasaki, is a very small army. Against it, set the fact that the Susuhunan of Mataram brought tens of thousands to the walls of Batavia in 1629.

Where did the men come from? Between 1602 and 1795 the Company shipped somewhere approaching a million Europeans to Asia. They were overwhelmingly not immigrants; they were crews and soldiers. About forty per cent of the sailors and about sixty per cent of the soldiers came from outside the Republic, principally the German lands; one specialist estimate puts three of every four VOC soldiers as German. And they mostly did not come back. Roughly one in three of the Company's European employees returned to Europe, and for soldiers the proportion was worse — a figure that overstates mortality somewhat, since some stayed on as freeburghers or made careers in Asia, and understates the horror not at all.

To sign on as a soldier of this Company was, on the evidence of the wages, a last resort. Pay was comparable to service in the army of the Republic, which was in Europe, safe by comparison, and did not require an eight-month voyage. The Company then reduced the wage further by requiring soldiers to buy their clothing and equipment from it. Training, so far as the thin literature allows a judgement, consisted of a parade every fortnight; there was no instruction whatever in the kind of warfare the men would actually be doing. Many of them worked full-time at other trades, paid a comrade to stand their guard duty, and bribed a superior to look away.

And then there was the climate. Van Dam records that in 1684, of fifteen hundred soldiers at Batavia, one quarter were fit for combat duty of any kind; the rest were laid low by disease or by the heat.

This is the floor: a few thousand desperate men from the poorer parts of Germany, shipped half the circumference of the earth at enormous expense, of whom two-thirds would never see home again and three-quarters at any given moment could not stand a watch.

An army built out of the wreckage of its own operations

It could not be enough, and the Company knew it could not, and the way it made up the difference is the finding of this module.

The first non-Europeans in the Company's service were seventy Japanese, recruited at the Hirado factory in 1612 — a practice the Portuguese and Spanish had used before it, and one the Tokugawa government forbade in 1621. For a while they were the only ones. Then, after the founding of Batavia, the Company began to draw on the population that had begun to gather around it, and the composition of that population is the point.

The first group were the Mardijkers, from the Malay *merdeka*, free. They were, at the outset, prisoners of war: Asian soldiers who had fought for the Portuguese, largely Christian converts from India, taken as the Company reduced Portuguese positions

and allowed to settle around Batavia. The Company formed them into a civil militia and then used them on expeditions. To these were added slaves at Batavia who converted to Christianity and were manumitted, and the mestizo children of the town, until the word came to mean simply the Christian free non-Europeans of Batavia and its hinterland. From this pool the Company could raise a few hundred soldiers in the first decades.

Then the *Ommelanden* — the lands around the town — which the Company deliberately encouraged people to settle and cultivate, and whose inhabitants it organised into what it called nations, each with its own captain, each appearing on the battlefield under its own banner. The Company armed them in wartime and did not train them in European methods; each nation, as the specialist account puts it, fought in its own way. Kampongs were laid out for them from 1663.

Now read the list of nations. The Bandanese were at Batavia because Coen had brought them there as captives after 1621; within a decade or so they had their own captain and political bodies and had been incorporated into the town's defence. The Ambonese came in 1656, when a body of warriors under Radja Tahalela who had been fighting for the Company in the Ambonese wars sailed to Batavia with a returning fleet and settled. The Balinese and Butonese, who mattered more later, arrived largely through the slave trade. The Mardijkers were Portuguese soldiers the Company had defeated.

Every one of those groups is a residue of a previous operation of the same floor. The men who held Batavia for the Company were, to a very substantial degree, the survivors of places the Company had taken, transplanted to the capital and given a captain and a banner. An order that had no local recruiting ground manufactured one out of its own casualties.

And the Javanese? They were available, they were on the island, they were numerous. The Company's own officers rated them, on the assessment reported in the specialist literature, the least martial and least reliable of all the groups it drew on. Batavia had in any case barred Javanese settlement from its foundation on the frank ground that the Company did not propose to be outnumbered in its own capital by the people whose country it was.

This is the exact photographic negative of the other great chartered conquest of the same century. In Bengal the Company recruited the country it took: high-caste men out of Bihar and Awadh, in tens of thousands, on regular pay, because two centuries of a cash revenue system had built and then failed to keep paying a deep and liquid market in military labour, and a newcomer with money had only to bid into it. In Java the Company shipped its infantry eighteen thousand miles, bought its auxiliaries at slave

markets from Bali to the Malabar coast, inherited others from its own defeated enemies, and rated the natives of the island it was standing on as the worst soldiers available to it.

One further detail settles the question of whether the Company was making a virtue of necessity. At the end of the seventeenth century Van Dam recorded that the High Government at Batavia would have preferred more Europeans, not fewer, and gave three reasons: Europeans were more reliable; using them prevented European tactics leaking to the enemy; and — on his own calculation, which turns on the fact that Europeans were paid for only half the year and had to buy their kit from the Company — they were in the end *cheaper* than local troops nominally engaged at half the wage.

The modern literature generally holds that local soldiers were the cheap and indispensable element of European power in Asia. The Company's own advocate, writing from the opinions of the Governor-General and Council, calculated the opposite. He may have been wrong. What he was not is confused about what the Company preferred.

Banda

The founding operation of the Company's power in the archipelago has to be given at its full weight, and then read for what it did to the floor, which is not the thing it is usually read for.

The Banda islands were the only source of nutmeg and mace in the world. The Company had been trying since 1609 to convert its contracts with the *orang kaya* — the islands' hereditary notables — into an enforceable monopoly, and had failed, because the Bandanese went on selling to the English, the Javanese and anyone else who came, which was the entire basis of their economy and had been for centuries.

In 1621 Coen went with a force whose composition is itself the argument of this module: something like sixteen hundred and fifty European soldiers, joining about two hundred and fifty already in the garrison, together with two hundred and eighty-odd Javanese convicts and eighty to a hundred Japanese mercenaries. The Europeans had come from Germany by way of Amsterdam. The Javanese were prisoners. The Japanese were hired swordsmen in the last year before their government stopped the trade.

The islands were overrun in weeks. Villages and boats were destroyed, those who could not escape were killed, and the survivors fled to the hills or to the English islands of Run and Ai. Resistance continued, and on 8 May 1621 forty-four of the *orang kaya* of Lontor were brought to Fort Nassau on Neira, tried for a conspiracy the confessions to which had been obtained under torture, and executed inside a bamboo enclosure. One of Coen's own officers, Nicolaas van Waert, left an account which the Dutch

scholar H. T. Colenbrander later identified, and which reaches this study only in an English rendering that has not been checked against the Dutch:

> *"The condemned prisoners stood in the perk where six Japanese mercenaries had been ordered who then with their sharp swords first sliced in half through their middles the eight most important and strongest orang kayas; after which they beheaded them and quartered their bodies. The remaining thirty-six orang kayas were then beheaded and quartered as were the first; the executions were extremely cruel to behold."*

An anonymous eyewitness account, reported by the Dutch museum project that has worked on the episode, records one of the condemned asking in Dutch: *"Mijn heeren, en isser dan geen genaede?"* — my lords, is there then no mercy. The provenance is anonymous and the line is given here as reported rather than as verified.

The heads and quartered bodies were displayed on bamboo poles.

The demographic outcome is contested in every particular and is given here as the range the literature offers. The pre-conquest population is usually put at something in the region of thirteen to fifteen thousand. What the campaign and its aftermath removed — killed in the fighting, starved in the hill forts, drowned in flight, enslaved and shipped out — converges in the modern accounts on something close to fourteen thousand, though the components do not reconcile: one reckoning gives about two thousand eight hundred killed and about seventeen hundred enslaved, with a further thousand or so expelled to Batavia, which does not add to the total the same accounts elsewhere assert. Something over five hundred Bandanese survivors were summoned to Batavia Castle at the end of January 1622, interrogated under torture about a supposed plot to burn the city, and eight more executed; the rest were enslaved.

The islands were then re-let. Under the *perkenier* system the Company granted the nutmeg groves to Dutch planters, who worked them with slaves imported for the purpose. The population that had been cleared was replaced by a population that had been bought.

That is worth stating precisely because it is a different operation from the one this collection usually examines. An extraction taken as a flow — a harvest, a rent, a labour service — needs the producer alive and is tuned to keep him so. What Coen wanted was not the Bandanese surplus but the Bandanese ground, and specifically the guarantee that nobody else would ever hold it; and for that there is no rate to set. The killing was not an excess laid over the extraction. It was the shape the extraction took.

And now the part that belongs to this module rather than to the accounting. The several hundred Bandanese Coen carried to Batavia were brought there, on his own

reasoning, to populate the town and its hinterland. Within a decade they were a recognised nation of the *Ommelanden*, with a captain, their own political bodies, and a place in the defence of the city.

The Company killed the Bandanese to take their islands and then garrisoned its capital with the survivors. This is not a paradox and it did not require anybody to be a hypocrite. It is what a floor does when it has no local recruiting ground: it takes its manpower from the only place it reliably generates any, which is the population it has just displaced. The cost of that arrangement does not appear on any casualty list, and it is this — that every further conquest becomes a source of soldiers, so that the marginal expansion looks cheaper on the books than it is.

What actually held Batavia

The military test of the founding came nine and ten years later, and it settled what the floor really consisted of.

After Surabaya fell in 1625 Sultan Agung turned west. Batavia stood between him and Banten, the last major independent Javanese power, and he had told a Dutch embassy as early as 1614 that peace with him would be impossible if they tried to hold any part of Java. In April 1628 the regent of Tegal was sent to Batavia to propose terms. The Dutch refused them.

The first army came in August 1628 under Tumenggung Bahureksa, regent of Kendal. Its approach is recorded in the inventory of the fleet, which is more informative than any narrative: a hundred and fifty cattle, five thousand nine hundred sacks of sugar, twenty-six thousand six hundred coconuts and twelve thousand sacks of rice, presented as a trading venture and admitted to the roadstead one ship at a time under the guns while a hundred armed men watched the landing. The ruse fooled nobody for long. The Mataram troops blockaded the roads, tried to dam the Ciliwung to cut the water, and threw themselves repeatedly at the fortifications for heavy loss. By December the army was out of food in a district that had nothing to give it. On 2 December Sultan Agung sent executioners to punish his own commanders; when the Dutch went out the next day they found the besiegers gone and, on the standard accounts, seven hundred and forty-four headless bodies of Javanese soldiers left behind.

Agung read the defeat correctly. The problem was not courage and not numbers; it was that he had marched an army roughly three hundred miles from its granaries. So he built granaries. Between the sieges he settled rice-farming villages along the north coast of west Java, from Cirebon through Karawang, populating a thinly held stretch of country with Javanese cultivators for the express purpose of feeding the next campaign

— a piece of state-building undertaken as a logistical measure, and one whose consequences are still visible in the rice fields between Cirebon and Bekasi.

The second army came in May 1629. The Company's spies located the depots. Dutch ships went to Tegal and Cirebon and destroyed the stores and the vessels in the harbours. The Mataram army arrived at Batavia already starving, was ravaged by sickness, and failed.

There is the floor, and it is not what the founding legend of European expansion says it is. It was not that the Dutch soldier was better. The Company's soldiers were untrained, unfit and outnumbered by an order of magnitude, and the professional core of a Javanese army — the *prajurit* — was neither ill-equipped nor ill-led. It was that a walled town at a river mouth can be victualled indefinitely by sea, and an army four hundred miles from home cannot; and that the same ships which fed the fortress could reach out and burn the food of the men besieging it, while nothing the besiegers possessed could reach the ships.

The decisive military fact of this conquest was logistical, not tactical, and it was decided at the granary rather than at the wall.

The technology was not the answer either

It is worth closing off the alternative explanation, because it is the one that gets reached for.

The volley — three ranks, the front firing while the others reload, the fired rank stepping back — was the celebrated European infantry innovation of the period, and it is regularly credited with the disparity. But the Company's own warfare consisted largely of expeditions into broken and forested country where standing in ranks is useless, and the drill was not in any case a secret. Firearms circulated throughout maritime Asia by trade and by local manufacture; Ricklefs has shown the Javanese *prajurit* acquiring muskets in growing numbers, adopting volley fire, and becoming markedly more effective at it towards the end of the seventeenth century.

The Company knew this perfectly well, which is why Van Dam's second reason for preferring European troops was that employing them kept European tactics from leaking to the enemy. The leak happened anyway. A technique that can be watched can be copied, and the Javanese watched.

Where the floor stopped

The best assessment of what the Company's floor was worth was made by Javanese, early, and Coen wrote it down.

Reporting what was said at Banten, he recorded that the Bantenese feared no Portuguese, no Spaniards, no Dutchmen and no Englishmen, but only Mataram — because from Mataram no one can flee, whereas against the others, *"we have the whole mountain range at our disposal: they cannot pursue us there with their ships."*

That is a complete and correct strategic analysis, delivered in one sentence by a party the Company would have described as a native prince, and it remained correct for a very long time. The Europeans were a coastal force. Their strength was ships, and ships stop at the tideline; a power that could be escaped by walking inland was a nuisance rather than a sovereign. What the sentence says, translated into the terms this study will need, is that the Company's floor reached exactly as far as its supply line and not one march further.

Everything that follows in this study is the Company's two-hundred-and-fifty-year effort to make that sentence false — and the striking thing is that it did not make it false by extending its floor. It made it false by acquiring, one treaty at a time, a Javanese authority that already reached inland, and hiring that authority to do the reaching for it. The floor that took Batavia never became an instrument for governing Java. It became an instrument for making Javanese princes sign things.

Reading the floor against the framework

Three refinements, and the first is the one this case was worth running for.

First: what generates a market in military labour is a cash military fiscal system in the previous order, and where the previous order pays its soldiers in other men's labour, no such market exists to be bought. The collection already holds that a conqueror arriving in a country with a deep market in military service need not import an army; he imports a payroll and an officer corps, and holds the country cheaply with men recruited from it, on terms rather than by belief. That finding was drawn from Bengal, where two centuries of Mughal practice had assessed revenue in silver, paid soldiers through rank-holders and assignment-holders, and trained whole districts of families to sell military service for cash — and had then run out of money.

Java is the negative instance, and it locates the precondition precisely. Mataram did not pay soldiers. It assigned them: a man who held the labour of a stated number of households owed the centre men when the centre called, and the obligation ran through the assignment rather than through a wage. There was no standing body of men whose living was the sale of military service to whoever was hiring, because nobody was hiring — service was owed, not bought. A newcomer with a chest of silver therefore had nothing to bid into. He could hire individual mercenaries in the international ports, buy slaves, and inherit the soldiers of powers he defeated, and the

Company did all three; what he could not do was raise a Javanese army by opening a pay ledger, and the record shows that for a century and a half he did not try.

So the research instruction sharpens. Do not ask whether the conquered population is warlike. Ask **how the previous order paid its soldiers** — because a country that pays in coin has, by that fact alone, manufactured a labour market a stranger can enter, and a country that pays in assignments of other people's labour has manufactured an obligation a stranger cannot inherit.

Second: a floor with no local recruiting ground builds itself out of the human residue of its own operations, and this makes further conquest look cheaper than it is. Batavia was garrisoned by Portuguese-trained soldiers the Company had beaten, by Bandanese it had carried off from islands it had emptied, by Ambonese from the wars in the Moluccas, and by Balinese and Butonese it had bought. The pattern is not incidental; it is the only supply available to a floor that cannot recruit where it stands.

The consequence belongs in the accounting and will not show up there without help. Each operation generates the manpower for the next, so the apparent marginal cost of expansion falls as the enterprise grows — and an apex reading its own books sees a war that pays for its own garrison. What the books do not show is that the reason there are men to garrison with is that a population elsewhere has been broken up and moved. **Where a floor recruits from its own displaced, the cheapness is real in the ledger and the cost has been paid by somebody who does not appear in it.**

Third: where the decisive military advantage is logistical rather than tactical, the floor's reach is the reach of the supply line, and the order will be structurally driven to buy what it cannot take. Batavia did not survive 1629 because its soldiers were better; a quarter of them were fit to stand up. It survived because it could be fed from the sea and its besieger could not be fed from Central Java, and because the same ships that fed it could burn the granaries Sultan Agung had planted villages to fill. That is a decisive advantage and it has a hard edge: it does not travel inland. A tactical advantage can be marched anywhere; a logistical one stops where the ships stop.

An order in that position has exactly two options for anything beyond the tideline. It can extend the supply line, at a cost that rises faster than the returns. Or it can find somebody whose authority already reaches inland and buy it. The whole subsequent shape of this case — treaties with princes rather than a land settlement, delivery obligations rather than direct administration, a hereditary Javanese aristocracy confirmed and paid rather than displaced — follows from an arithmetic that was settled in the harbours of Tegal and Cirebon in 1629. **The instruction is to read a conqueror's settlement against the reach of his floor, because a settlement is very often the purchase of exactly the ground the floor could not hold.**

A note on sources.

The exact quotation in this module is scant and two of the three passages reach this study at one remove, which is stated on the page and repeated here.

The Bantenese assessment from which this module takes its title — that they feared no Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutchmen or Englishmen but only Mataram, since from Mataram no one can flee while against the others the whole mountain range was at their disposal and *"they cannot pursue us there with their ships"* — is Coen's own report of what was said at Banten, cited to volume I of H. T. Colenbrander's edition of the Coen papers. Coen's request for seven hundred soldiers and three hundred sailors, "not just to preserve this place, but to keep safe a good portion of the surrounding land and to keep the neighbouring kingdoms in check," is cited to the same edition. **Both reach this study as English renderings in Tristan Mostert's study of the Company's military system, and the Colenbrander edition has not been consulted directly.** Both are load-bearing and should be checked against Colenbrander before further use. The first is in any case a Dutchman's record of a Javanese view and should be read as such.

The account of the executions of 8 May 1621 attributed to Nicolaas van Waert, an officer present, is quoted in an English rendering reproduced in the recent commemorative literature; **the Dutch original has not been seen** and the identification of van Waert as its author rests on Colenbrander. The Dutch line *"Mijn heeren, en isser dan geen genaede?"* is reported as coming from an anonymous eyewitness account and is given as reported rather than as verified.

The charter's own text and the Landscape's other primary material are not re-quoted here.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Tristan Mostert's work on the Company's military system supplies the establishment figures (two hundred soldiers with Matelieff in 1605; the resolution of August 1606 setting fifty soldiers to a large ship and ten to a yacht; five hundred and ninety soldiers in seven positions by 1609; about a thousand a year despatched after 1642; a total approaching ten thousand by the end of the century; Van Dam's figure of eight thousand two hundred and his preference for European troops on grounds of reliability, security of tactics and cost; and Van Dam's observation that in 1684 only a quarter of the fifteen hundred soldiers at Batavia were fit for duty), together with the account of the Japanese recruited at Hirado from 1612 and forbidden by the Tokugawa in 1621, the Mardijkers and their derivation from *merdeka*, the organisation of the *Ommelanden* into nations under their own captains with kampongs from 1663, the arrival of the Ambonese under Radja Tahalela in 1656, and the judgement — Mostert's summary of the Company's

own view — that the Javanese were rated the least martial and reliable of the groups available. The underlying works he draws on are D. de Iongh on the Company's military system, Roelof van Gelder on the Germans in Company service, Remco Raben on the Asian legion, and Pieter van Dam's own *Beschryvinge*. M. C. Ricklefs is credited for the diffusion of firearms and volley fire among the Javanese *prajurit*. The personnel totals — approaching a million Europeans carried to Asia between 1602 and 1795, about forty per cent of sailors and sixty per cent of soldiers recruited outside the Republic, and roughly one in three returning — are from the standard reference literature deriving from Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer's *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*; van Gelder's estimate that three in four soldiers were German is a different measure from the sixty per cent figure and both are given rather than reconciled. Erik Odegard is credited for the finding that the Company, unlike the English and French, never made the shift to predominantly local recruitment of soldiers.

Contested figures are given as ranges. **The Banda numbers do not reconcile and no total is adopted here.** The pre-conquest population is usually put at thirteen to fifteen thousand; the modern accounts converge on something close to fourteen thousand killed, enslaved or driven out, while one commonly cited breakdown of about two thousand eight hundred killed and seventeen hundred enslaved with a further thousand expelled does not sum to that figure; the number of *orang kaya* executed is given as forty-four in most accounts, with forty-seven captured and forty-eight also in circulation. The composition of Coen's 1621 force — about sixteen hundred and fifty Europeans joining some two hundred and fifty already in garrison, with two hundred and eighty-six Javanese convicts and eighty to a hundred Japanese — follows Willard Hanna's account as reproduced in the recent literature. The figure of seven hundred and forty-four Javanese dead left outside Batavia in December 1628 is the conventional one; the strength of the Mataram armies of 1628 and 1629 is given in the sources only as tens of thousands and no number is adopted. The date of the fall of Jayakarta is given variously as 28, 29 and 30 May 1619, as recorded previously.

Two things this module does not establish and should not be read as establishing. It does not establish what the Company's floor cost in guilders, which the extraction module will need and which requires the Company's own accounts rather than the establishment figures used here. And the proportion of Company employees in Asia who were soldiers — reported as rising from about thirty per cent in 1625 to about forty-seven per cent in 1688 — is quoted from a single secondary summary, is precisely the number the argument about a ruinous floor most wants, and is for that reason flagged rather than relied upon.

MODULE 2

Six Hundred Rods from the Sea

Module 2 · The Settlement — what was transferred, to whom, and on what paper: an option over the coastline of an island, a throne received as a favour, and an office that had to be invented before it could be filled.

The strip

On 11 November 1743, in the tenth article of a treaty of reconciliation concluded at Kartasura, the Susuhunan of Mataram ceded to the Dutch East India Company, among other things, this:

> *"Ten tweeden werd generalijk aan de Comp' afgestaan seshonderd roeden lands langs de boord van de zee, en even zooveel langs de boord van alle de rivieren, die in zee uytlopen, op en rondom geheel Java, met alle regt van eygendom, opperheerschappye en gebruyk naar eygen welgevallen."*

Secondly there is generally ceded to the Company six hundred rods of land along the edge of the sea, and as much along the banks of all the rivers that run out into the sea, on and around the whole of Java, with all right of property, overlordship and use at its own pleasure.

A *roede* in Dutch practice ran to something under four metres — about 3.77 in the Rhineland measure most commonly used in the Indies, about 3.68 in the Amsterdam — so six hundred of them make a band roughly two and a quarter kilometres deep. Drawn around the entire coast of Java and carried inland along every river that reaches the sea, that is not a piece of territory in the ordinary sense. It is a shape: the shape of what could be reached from a ship.

The article continues, and the continuation is the more remarkable half. The Susuhunan undertakes for himself and his heirs to exercise no jurisdiction whatever within that band as often as the Company should choose to forbid it and to make use of its right of property; and undertakes further not to compel anyone living inside the band to move out of it and come under his own jurisdiction. In return, the Company allows him to go on holding the land — where and for so long as the Company has not taken possession of it — *"tot wederzeggens toe"*, until revoked, and without that indulgence being allowed to prejudice the cession in any way.

What the Company acquired in November 1743 was therefore not a coastal province. It was a standing, unilateral, unexpiring option over the entire perimeter of Java, exercisable in whole or in part whenever it suited, against a sovereign who had agreed in advance not to contest it. It did not exercise the option immediately, and in the case of the eastern districts ceded in the same article it did not take actual possession until 1772 — twenty-nine years later.

That is the settlement in this case, in one clause: a document acquiring precisely the ground the floor could hold, drawn to the reach of a ship's boat, held in reserve until wanted, over a country the Company had no intention of governing.

How the strip was bought: the price of restitution

The clause did not appear from nowhere. It was the largest instalment in a sequence of purchases running over sixty-six years, and the sequence has one repeated structure.

In February 1677 the Company concluded a contract of alliance with Amangkurat II, whose father's court at Plered had just fallen to the Madurese rebel Trunajaya and who had no army left. The contract was ratified in March; a Dutch fleet cleared Trunajaya out of Surabaya in May; and in January 1678 the alliance was enlarged, with sovereignty over Semarang and adjoining coastal districts ceded to the Company along with monopolies on the export trades. Company and Mataram troops then fought a three-year campaign that destroyed the rebellion, and Amangkurat II killed Trunajaya with his own hands on 2 January 1680.

In 1705, after the first of what the Dutch would come to call the Javanese Wars of Succession, the winner — Pakubuwana I, who had been Prince Puger, and whom the Company had backed against the sitting Susuhunan — signed a treaty ceding eastern Madura.

In November 1743, after the Chinese War, in which Pakubuwana II had first joined a rising against the Company and then been restored by it, came the great cession. The opening words of Article 10 give the formula that governs the whole series:

> *"In erkentenisse van deese genereuse restitutie ende herstelling van den Soesoehoenang in het Javasche rijk verklaard den Soesoehoenang by desen aan de Comp' te cedeeren en met hetzelfde regt van opperheerschappye, dat hy tot hiertoe op die landen heeft gehad, volkomen over te geeven en af te staan..."*

In recognition of this generous restitution and restoration of the Susuhunan in the Javanese realm, the Susuhunan declares by these presents to cede to the Company, and

with the same right of overlordship as he has hitherto had over those lands, wholly to give over and relinquish...

And then the list: the whole eastern corner of Java, east of a line drawn north and south from Pasuruan; the six-hundred-rod strip; Surabaya with its dependent regencies; the entire district of Rembang with its teak forests; Japara with its forests and all its revenues, on as full a right as the Susuhunan had held them; and the *sabandharijen* — the harbourmaster's offices, which is to say the customs — at Semarang and its districts. Madura followed, contested by its own ruler Cakraningrat IV, who was taken by the Company and exiled to the Cape, where he died in 1746.

Set the formula beside the transaction and the business model is legible. The Company's product was restitution. It sold the recovery or the retention of a throne, and it took payment in sovereignty over ground. Each sale weakened the buyer, which made the next sale necessary, and the price of the next sale was higher because there was less left to bargain with. That is not a conspiracy and it does not require anyone to have planned it; it is what happens when the only firm in the market for a service is also the only party that gains from the customer's continued need for it.

The word to hold onto is *herstelling*. Restoration. Every one of these instruments is a receipt.

What the Company had been selling all along

It is worth being exact about the commodity, because the obvious answer is wrong.

The Company was not selling protection in the ordinary sense: it repeatedly failed to protect, and in 1751 it took a serious beating on the Bogowonto in which its commander, Major de Clercq, was killed. It was not selling administration: it declined, again and again, to administer. What it sold was the capacity to make one claimant's title stick against another's — artillery in the service of a succession dispute, in a polity where succession was the standing question and where a prince's authority rested on being acknowledged rather than on holding an office.

And that is why the payment took the form it did. A Javanese ruler could not pay in cash; there was very little cash, and the revenue that existed came in as rice and labour through assignments. He could not pay in office, because there was no transferable office to give. What he had, and what the Company would take, was ground and the rights over it — the harbours, the customs, the forests, the strip.

The deed of 11 December 1749

Then, once, the Company was offered the whole thing.

Pakubuwana II had been restored in 1743 at the price described above, and had immediately generated the next war by the manner of the settlement. His brother Mangkubumi had been promised a reward for his help — an assignment of three thousand *cacah*, three thousand peasant households — and when he claimed it, Governor-General van Imhoff rebuked him publicly before the whole court as too ambitious. Mangkubumi left the court and took up arms in May 1746. By 1749 the war was going badly, the Susuhunan was mortally ill, and he sent for Johan Andries, Baron von Hohendorff, the Company's governor on the north-east coast, who had been his friend.

Hohendorff's own account, in the day-register he kept, records his surprise: he understood the sick man to be offering to make him king of Mataram, and refused. When the Susuhunan pressed, Hohendorff asked him to put it in writing. The document, headed as a deed of relinquishment and surrender of the Mataram realm, reads in part:

> *"Ik, Soesoehoenang Pacoeboeana Senapatty Ingalaga Abdul Rachman Sahidin Panatagama, bekenne en verklare mits desen opentlijk, dat alzoo my om de swaere ziekte, waermede van de hand des almogenden ben bezogt, buyten staet bevinde om langer het magtig Mattarmsche rijk te beheeren, buyten confusie te houden en na behooren te regeeren, het voorschreven rijk met ab- en dependentie, alle gezag, magt en authoriteyt, welke ik tot dato hebbe gehad, over te geven aan de Doorlugtige Oostindische Comp'..."*

I, Susuhunan Pakubuwana Senapati Ingalaga Abdul Rachman Sahidin Panatagama, acknowledge and declare openly by these presents that, since by reason of the grave sickness with which I have been visited by the hand of the Almighty I find myself unable any longer to govern the mighty realm of Mataram, to keep it from confusion and to rule it as is fitting, [I do] hand over the aforesaid realm with all that appertains and depends upon it, and all authority, power and jurisdiction which I have had up to this date, to the Illustrious East India Company...

and then, the clause that is the point:

> *"...maar 't rijk voorschreven, in voegen voormelt, by deesen uyt eygene vrye en onbedwongene wil gecedeert en overgegeven te hebben aen voorschreven Doorlugtige Comp'..."*

but to have, by these presents, ceded and handed over the aforesaid realm to the aforesaid Illustrious Company **of my own free and unconstrained will**.

The instrument goes on: he renounces the least pretension to it from that moment; he will meddle no further in any affair of the realm even should God be pleased to raise him from this sickness and keep him some years yet among the living, but will pass his remaining days in quiet, without the least involvement and retaining no lustre, all of which he here holds as resigned; and he commends his children, and particularly the crown prince, to the protection of the Company. He signed it in triplicate and sealed it with his great seal.

The editor of the printed collection reproduces what stood on the original beside the imperial seal in red lacquer: *"eenige characters, door den sieken Soesoehoenang Pacoeboeana eygenhandig ter neder gesteld"* — some characters, set down in his own hand by the sick Susuhunan. He was too ill to make a proper signature. Beneath: in the presence of us, and two Dutch names.

Surakarta, 11 December 1749.

The phrase to hold is the one about free and unconstrained will. It is doing exactly the work such phrases always do. The man was dying, his capital was held by Company troops, half his kingdom was in rebellion against him, and the alternative on offer was nothing at all; and the deed records that he acted freely. That is not a lie in the sense of a false statement of fact — nobody had a knife to his hand — and it is not the truth either. It is a legal fiction of the ordinary kind, which is to say a form of words that converts a situation into a transaction, and the reason to name it as fiction is not to score a point against the men who drafted it but because the entire subsequent legitimacy of Dutch rule in Java descends from it and it is therefore worth knowing precisely what it says and what it was for.

The instrument of 14 December

Three days later the Company collected on it, and the collecting document is the more extraordinary of the two.

Batavia had instructed Hohendorff to proclaim the eldest son as Susuhunan, but only after he had confirmed every existing agreement with the Company. So on 14 December the crown prince, Pangeran Adipati Anom, executed a bond — an *acte-obligatoir* — and swore it before he was proclaimed. The heart of it:

> *"...zoo verklaar ik mits desen opentlijk, dat my het voorschreven rijk niet komt toe te vallen uyt kragt van eenige vermaking, erffenisse of geboorte, maar dat ik hetselve alleen uyt enkelde gunst en genegentheyt, ter beheeringe, uyt handen van de voormelde Doorlugtige Compagnie kome te ontfangen..."*

So I declare openly by these presents that the aforesaid realm does not come to fall to me by virtue of any bequest, inheritance or birth, but that I receive it, to administer, solely out of the mere favour and goodwill of the aforesaid Illustrious Company, from its hands.

He goes on to bind himself to the contracts of 11 and 13 November 1743 and 18 May 1746 as though he had made them himself, to hold them as an everlasting law and rule in his government, and to swear them publicly before assuming the government. Then:

> *"En ingevolge van dien zal dus door my en myne nakomelingen nooit nog ten eeuwigen dage geen de alderminste preetensie gemaakt of mogen gemaakt worden op 't Mattarmsche rijk, welk ik eenelijk vanwegen d'E. Compagnie en uyt handen van den heer gouverneur Van Hohendorff ter bestieringe ontfange..."*

And accordingly neither I nor my descendants shall ever, to all eternity, make or be permitted to make the least pretension whatsoever upon the realm of Mataram, which I receive only on behalf of the Honourable Company and from the hands of Governor Van Hohendorff, to administer...

And among the obligations of his government, in the same sentence as the promise to raise no objection to any arrangement the High Government might make: *"voor het compleet inkoomen van 's E. Comp' leverantie neerstiglijk te waeken"* — to watch diligently over the complete coming-in of the Company's deliveries — and to do, undertake or contrive nothing without the prior knowledge of the Company's resident at his court and of his own two chief ministers.

Signed in triplicate, sealed in red lacquer, the signature in Javanese characters. Surakarta, 14 December 1749.

Read the two documents together and the transaction is complete and clean. On the eleventh, the Company acquires the sovereignty of Java by cession. On the fourteenth, it returns the government of Java as a delegation, on written condition that the recipient formally deny that birth has anything to do with his title, that he and all his descendants forswear any claim of right, and that among the duties of his office is the supervision of a delivery quota. On the fifteenth, Hohendorff proclaimed him Pakubuwana III.

This is the moment the case exists to compare. In Bengal, nine years before, the Company had not yet done anything of the kind and would take a different road when it did: it obtained from a Mughal emperor a grant of the *diwani*, an office that genuinely existed, with a title, a function, a staff and a patent, and it then exercised that

office through the machinery already attached to it while leaving a nawab on a throne it did not claim. It took the department and left the crown.

In Java the Company took the crown and manufactured a department.

And it did not work

Because the thing it had acquired on paper was not the thing that made a Javanese ruler a ruler.

On 12 December 1749 — the day after the deed of cession and three days before Hohendorff's proclamation — Mangkubumi, in the field, declared himself Susuhunan. He had the support that mattered: much of the aristocracy, a great many of the country people, and the reputation for having been publicly humiliated by a foreigner over a claim of three thousand households. The war he had begun in 1746 went on for another six years. In 1751 the Company was badly defeated on the Bogowonto. Ricklefs's phrase for the intervening years, as the printed collection's editor renders the period, is a time of frightening confusion.

The Company had, in its strongbox, a valid instrument conveying the whole realm of Mataram, executed in triplicate under the imperial seal. It could not make the realm obey it. What it had bought was a claim; what it needed was acceptance; and the two had come apart because in this order authority had never resided in an instrument in the first place. A Mughal *diwan* held his office because a patent said so and a bureaucracy acted on the patent. A Javanese susuhunan held his because men acknowledged him, and acknowledgement is not conveyed by deed.

Giyanti, 13 February 1755: the Company gives half of it back

The war ended when Governor Nicolaas Hartingh, exploiting a falling-out between Mangkubumi and his nephew Mas Said, negotiated a treaty of reconciliation. Its first article does something that should be dwelt on. The Company, "representing the highest and sovereign authority" in these lands, having forgiven Mangkubumi his offences, appoints and recognises him as lawfully chosen Sultan over the lands

> *"...welke als een leen aan denzelven werden afgestaan, met het regt van successie voor zyne wettige erven... ingevalle zich omtrent de Comp' wel komen te gedragen..."**

which are ceded to him **as a fief**, with the right of succession for his lawful heirs... in case they conduct themselves well towards the Company.

And Mangkubumi, in the same article, in the first person:

> *"...en ik, Sulthan Hamingco Boeana, certificeere en verklare by dezen met de uiterste dankbaarheid en erkentenisse als eene singuliere gunst die waardigheid te ontvangen op de hierna te meldene conditién en voorwaarden..."*

and I, Sultan Hamengkubuwana, certify and declare by these presents, with the utmost gratitude and acknowledgement, that I receive that dignity as a singular favour, on the conditions and terms hereinafter set out.

The second article provides that there shall reside for all time a sincere friendship and harmony between the subjects of the Company and the peoples of Java, each faithfully aiding the other in every need with counsel and deed, promoting each other's good and averting each other's harm, *"even alsof zij één volk waren"* — just as if they were one people.

The third article is the working one, and it is the answer to the question this study has been carrying since the Landscape:

> *"...zullen zoowel de rijksbestierder als andere hoofdregenten en alle degeenen, dewelke in de bovenlanden eenig gezag hebben, wanneer zy door den Sulthan worden aangesteld, alvorens tot de exercitie van hun ampt te worden geadmitteerd, tot Samarang in persoon moeten komen afleggen aan handen van den gouverneur en directeur..."*

both the chief minister and the other head regents, and all those who hold any authority whatever in the uplands, when they are appointed by the Sultan, must — before being admitted to the exercise of their office — come in person to Semarang and there take [the oath] into the hands of the governor and director.

The chair the Company built

There it is, and it took seventy-eight years.

The Landscape recorded that Mataram had no office a stranger could enter. Its lords held revocable assignments of other men's labour, granted at the centre's pleasure, recorded nowhere a stranger could read, renewed by attendance and marriage and personal submission to a man. There was no patent to buy, no register to seize, no department whose keys could change hands. What the Company found was a web of persons.

So it built one. By 1755 every man in central Java who held any authority at all — the chief minister of an independent-titled sultan downwards — had to travel to a Dutch port on the north coast and swear an oath into the hands of a Dutch governor before he might exercise the authority his own sovereign had just conferred on him.

That is an office: a defined position, entered by a formal act, conferred by an authority outside the holder, and separable from the person.

And now the transaction that made it work, because the temptation is to read this as pure coercion and it was not.

Consider what a Javanese lord was actually being offered. Under Mataram his assignment was revocable, and revocable in principle at any moment, because the susuhunan's power *consisted* in that revocability. He could not be given a heritable estate by his own sovereign, since a sovereign who guarantees his nobles' possessions has by that act stopped being the kind of sovereign a Javanese king was. He lived, whatever his rank, at pleasure; and his sons' position depended on their standing with a court, not on any right.

What the Company gave him was permanence. Giyanti confers the fief with the right of succession for the Sultan's lawful heirs — conditional on good conduct towards the Company, certainly, but conditional in a way that is written down, that names the party whose favour must be kept, and that could therefore be complied with. In the regencies the same logic ran further and further: the *bupati* held from the Company, his son expected to succeed him, and by the middle of the nineteenth century the hereditary succession of the regents had been recognised in Dutch colonial law outright.

A foreign power could grant security of tenure precisely because it was foreign. It had no stake in keeping the Javanese aristocracy insecure — it had, in fact, every reason to want them stable, since it was buying deliveries and deliveries require a counterparty who will still be there next season. The native sovereign could not grant it without dismantling the mechanism of his own rule. So the newcomer arrived holding the one commodity the incumbent structurally could not sell, and did not have to make anyone a traitor to buy with it.

That is the settlement, and it explains the collaboration without recourse to venality, which is the reading it usually gets and which is both unkind and analytically empty.

The Priangan: a settlement that measured nothing

West of the courts, in the Sundanese highlands behind Batavia, the Company ran an arrangement so economical of effort that it is easy to miss how radical it was.

The regents of the Priangan were required to deliver a stated annual quota of coffee. Beyond that quota the Company levied no tax in the region at all. It did not assess the land. It did not survey it. It did not enumerate the households. It did not enquire what the regent took from the villages under him, and it left him free to go on exacting the traditional dues in rice and in labour service exactly as before. The regent received a

commission on the coffee, and — as the modern research on the system has established — most of the regents also accumulated very large debts to their patrons at Batavia, appeared annually at the colonial capital, and were in no doubt about what would happen if the coffee did not come. Coffee was introduced from the 1720s; the arrangement ran, in one form or another, until 1870, and vestiges of it survived into the twentieth century.

Compare that with what the Company had done in the Vorstenlanden, and with what its English rival was in the same decades constructing in Bengal, and a distinction emerges that will matter for the rest of this study.

A revenue settlement takes a share of a measured thing. To take a share you must know the size of the whole, which means a survey, a register, an assessment, a class of officials who can read it, and a permanent argument about whether the assessment is right. Everyone from the peasant upward is implicated in the measurement, and the measuring apparatus is the single most expensive thing a conqueror ever buys.

The Priangan settlement takes an output. So many pikuls of coffee, delivered at Cirebon. What happens upstream of the delivery is not the Company's business, is not written down, and is not knowable to it. The extraction below the quota is a sealed box.

This is enormously cheap at the top. It is also, and for exactly the same reason, invisible at the top. The Company could not tell, and did not undertake to find out, what its quota cost in the villages — how many days of labour, how much rice foregone, how many fields turned over from food. The information does not exist in its archive because the arrangement was designed not to generate it. That is not an oversight to be scored against clerks in Batavia; it is the direct consequence of buying a commodity instead of a revenue, and it will make the grim accounting in this case a harder problem than it was in Bengal, where at least the demand was written down.

The Ommelanden: property invented out of a claim

One further settlement, small in area and large in what it reveals.

In the lands around Batavia the Company did create landed property, in the full European sense, and it created it early. From the 1620s onward it granted and sold *particuliere landerijen* — private domains — to its own senior officials, to its Chinese business partners and to its allies. The holder was styled *landheer*, and what he acquired was not merely land: he possessed *landsheerlijke rechten*, seigniorial jurisdiction over the people living on his domain, the kind of authority that elsewhere belonged to the state. By the early eighteenth century the grants covered very nearly the whole northern coastal plain of west Java. They outlived the Company by a century and a quarter.

By what right? The Company created and sold these estates on the footing that it had succeeded to the rights of the ancient kings of Java.

The claim is worth dating. The estates begin in the 1620s. The cession that would have grounded such a claim — Pakubuwana II's deed of the whole realm — was executed in 1749, a hundred and twenty-odd years later, and covered central Java rather than the hinterland of Batavia. The legal theory, in other words, was in operation for four generations before any document existed to support it, and the document, when it did arrive, arrived for other reasons entirely.

This is the ordinary sequence and it is worth naming plainly because the reverse order is what everyone assumes. The conquest happens; the practice establishes itself; the theory is supplied to describe what is already being done; and the paperwork, if it ever comes, comes last and is then read backwards as the origin. Nobody in Batavia in 1625 sat down and reasoned from a doctrine of succession to the Javanese kings and thence to a grant of land. They granted the land, and the doctrine was what one said.

Who got what

The Company got: sovereignty over the eastern corner of Java, over Surabaya and its regencies, over Rembang and Japara with the teak, over Madura; the customs of Semarang; a revocable option on a two-kilometre band around the entire island and up every river; the harbours; delivery quotas in coffee, rice, indigo and timber; the right to install and to swear in every officeholder in the interior; and the private estates of the Ommelanden, distributed among its own servants.

The princes got: their thrones, expressly not by inheritance; a guaranteed succession for their heirs, expressly conditional on good conduct; a Company resident at the court; and the duty to see that the deliveries came in.

The regents got: permanence. A position that had been held at a king's pleasure became a position held from a corporation that wanted them to stay, and that eventually wrote their sons' right to succeed into its own statute book. They also got commissions, and debts to men in Batavia, which is a form of security too.

The Chinese of the north coast got the revenue farms and a share of the estates, which is a settlement in its own right and one this study will have to come back to, since the same population would be killed in thousands in Batavia in 1740.

And the cultivator got nothing, and this is the finding rather than a rhetorical flourish. No instrument in this entire sequence reaches him. Not one of these treaties mentions what he owes, to whom, in what quantity, or on what security. His obligations were, before 1677 and after 1755 alike, whatever the man holding the

assignment over his household said they were. The settlement was constructed so as not to have to know, and the not knowing was the economy of it.

Reading the settlement against the framework

Three refinements.

First, and this is the finding: where the incumbent order has no enterable office, the conqueror must manufacture one, and the currency he manufactures it with is security of tenure — which is the one thing the native sovereign structurally cannot offer.

The collection has held that a conquest is cheapest where the previous order left a chair a stranger can sit in: a defined office, entered by instrument, whose authority is attached to the position rather than to the man, so that a newcomer can take it without being accepted as a person. Bengal supplied the textbook case, and this study's Landscape recorded that Java supplied nothing of the kind — no patent, no register, no department, only assignments of labour held at a king's pleasure and renewed by attendance at his court.

What Java shows is what a conqueror does next, and it is not what one would guess. He does not give up and administer directly; that costs more than he can pay. He builds the missing office — and he finds that he has, without planning it, exactly the right thing to pay for it with. The Javanese lord's position was revocable because revocability *was* his sovereign's power; a king who guaranteed his nobles could not have governed as a Javanese king governed. So heritability was, in that order, structurally unpurchasable. The Company could sell it at no cost to itself, because its own power did not rest on the insecurity of Javanese lords — it rested on ships, and it wanted its counterparties to be stable, since a delivery contract requires somebody who will still be there next year.

The instruction that falls out is a question to put to every conquest in the collection: **what could the incoming power offer that the incumbent could not offer without destroying itself?** That is where the collaboration will be found, and finding it there dissolves most of the moralising in both directions. The men who swore at Semarang were not selling their country for money. They were buying, from the only vendor in the market, a thing their own kings had never been able to sell them.

Second: the instrument and the acceptance are separable, and where an order's coordination runs through persons rather than offices, acquiring the instrument acquires nothing but a claim.

The Company obtained the entire sovereignty of Mataram by a valid deed, executed in triplicate under the imperial seal, on 11 December 1749, and returned it as a delegation on the fourteenth. Within four days a rival had proclaimed himself, and it

took six more years of war and a serious defeat in the field before the Company could realise on its title — and it realised on it by giving half away as a fief.

The general point is that the transferability of authority is a property of the previous order, not of the transaction. Where authority sits in an office, a document moves it. Where it sits in acknowledgement, a document moves a claim and the acknowledgement has to be bought separately, at a price set by whoever is in a position to withhold it. **A conqueror should therefore read a cession not as an acquisition but as an option, and ask what the acceptance will cost — and in this case the acceptance cost half the kingdom.**

Third: a settlement that takes an output rather than a revenue is cheap at the apex precisely because it is blind at the apex, and the blindness is designed rather than accidental.

The Priangan arrangement required a quota of coffee and asked nothing else — no survey, no assessment, no enumeration, no enquiry into what the regent took. That is an enormous saving: the measuring apparatus is the most expensive thing any conqueror buys, and this one declined to buy it. The consequence is that the whole of the extraction below the delivery point is absent from the record, not because it was concealed but because it was never generated.

Where an order buys an output rather than assessing a revenue, the cost of the extraction is not hidden from the metropole — it is hidden from the colonial government itself, and no amount of honesty at either end will produce a number that was never made. That is a harder condition than concealment, and it has to be carried into the accounting rather than argued around there.

A note on sources.

The primary quotation in this module is exact and, for the first time in this study, taken from the printed source rather than at second hand.

The treaty texts are quoted from the *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*, the collection of the Company's political contracts edited by J. E. Heeres and continued by F. W. Stapel — volume V (1726–1752) for the contract of 11–13 November 1743 (document CMXVI in that volume's numbering of the Java–Mataram series), the deed of cession of 11 December 1749 (CMXIX) and the *acte-obligatoir* of 14 December 1749 (CMXX); volume VI (1753–1799) for the treaty of Giyanti of 13 February 1755. Stapel prints these from the *Overgekomen brieven* in the Company archive and notes in each case where they had previously been published, generally in De Jonge's *Opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*. **The text used here is the optical character recognition of a scanned copy of Stapel's printed edition obtained from the**

Internet Archive; obvious scanning errors have been silently corrected where the reading is unambiguous, and the passages should be collated against the printed edition before being quoted further. All translations from the Dutch are the collaboration's own; the Dutch of these documents is chancery Dutch of the period and several constructions admit more than one rendering.

Stapel's own editorial notes are the source for the surrounding narrative where cited: that Hohendorff kept a day-register of the events of December 1749, found in the *Overgekomen brieven* of 1751; that Mangkubumi had been publicly rebuked by van Imhoff in 1746; that the Company did not actually occupy East Java until 1772, twenty-nine years after the cession; and that the Company suffered a serious defeat on the Bogowonto in 1751 in which Major de Clercq was killed.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. M. C. Ricklefs for the chronology of the Javanese wars of succession and the character of the Mataram court. Jan Breman's research on the Priangan system for the position of the regents — the commissions, the accumulated debts to patrons at Batavia, the annual appearance at the colonial capital, and the judgement that coercion or its threat rather than payment was the operative motive. G. P. Rouffaer and Soemarsaid Moertono, as before, for the apanage structure. The account of the *particuliere landerijen* — their creation and sale from the 1620s to 1799, the title of *landheer*, the *landsheerlijke rechten* of seigniorial jurisdiction, and the Company's claim to have succeeded to the rights of the ancient kings of Java — follows the standard reference accounts and has **not** been traced to a Company instrument; the claim as such should be pinned to a specific grant before it is relied on further. Heather Sutherland's work on Java's regent families is the source for the observation that the hereditary succession of the regents received formal recognition in Dutch colonial law in the constitutional reforms of 1854.

Contested figures and unresolved points. The length of a *roede* varied by region and period; the Rhineland rod of about 3.767 metres was the standard generally used in the Indies and the Amsterdam rod of about 3.681 metres was also current, so the six-hundred-rod band is given here as roughly two and a quarter kilometres rather than to a fixed figure. The reward Mangkubumi claimed in 1746 is given in the accounts as three thousand *cacah*; the annual payment agreed to Pakubuwana II under the 1743 arrangement is given as twenty thousand *real*, which **has not been verified against the treaty text** and is reported here only in passing. The precise extent of the 1743 cessions on the ground, as distinct from on paper, is not established by the instrument and Stapel's own note that possession of East Java waited until 1772 indicates why.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish what the Priangan quotas actually were in weight or what proportion of a household's labour they

consumed, which the extraction module will need and which the arrangement was structured not to record. And the claim that the Company's grant of heritability was the decisive consideration for the Javanese aristocracy is here an inference from the structure of the two orders and from the terms of the instruments; it is **not** established from any Javanese statement of motive, and Javanese-language sources — the court chronicles in particular — would be required to test it.

To the Princes and Free Peoples of the Christian World

Module 3 · The Robe — a justification bought from a lawyer of twenty-one, published anonymously at the diplomatic moment, addressed to Europe, and pointed with some precision at the one body that could take the licence away.

The dedication

The most influential book ever written on behalf of a commercial company opens with a dedication, and the dedication is the whole of this module in five words.

AD PRINCIPES POPULOSQUE LIBEROS ORBIS CHRISTIANI

To the princes and free peoples of the Christian world.

The book is *Mare Liberum*, printed at Leiden by the Elzevier press in April 1609, anonymously. Its full title runs *Mare Liberum, sive de iure quod Batavis competit ad Indicana commercia* — The Free Sea, or of the right which belongs to the Batavians to trade with the Indies. The Batavians again: the extinct Rhine-delta tribe whose supposed free constitution Grotius himself had reconstructed out of Tacitus the year before, in a treatise arguing that the Dutch were their heirs and had therefore never been lawful subjects of arbitrary monarchy. Twelve years later the Company's directors would name a burnt Javanese port after them.

A pamphlet arguing the Dutch right to the Asian trade, dedicated to the princes and free peoples of Christendom. Note who is addressed and who is not. The Javanese are the subject of the argument in the way that a disputed estate is the subject of a boundary case: present throughout, party to nothing.

The commission

In February 1603 an armed merchantman of the newly chartered Company, commanded by Jacob van Heemskerck, attacked and took the Portuguese carrack *Santa Catarina* in the Straits of Singapore. The cargo — silk, porcelain, spices — was brought back and sold at Amsterdam for a sum in the region of three million guilders, comparable at the time to a substantial fraction of the Company's entire subscribed capital.

The seizure was controversial at home. Some of the Mennonite shareholders objected on principle and there was a question, which mattered legally, whether a trading company had any business making prize of another nation's shipping in peacetime waters eight thousand miles from any theatre of the Dutch revolt. So in 1604 the Company retained a lawyer to supply an answer. He was twenty-one years old and already famous, and his name was Hugo de Groot.

He produced, between 1604 and about 1606, a long manuscript he called *De rebus Indicis* and which its nineteenth-century editor titled *De Jure Praedae Commentarius* — a commentary on the law of prize and booty. It was not published. It sat among the family papers and was not printed until after it surfaced at a sale in 1864.

What was published was one chapter of it. In 1608 the Zeeland chamber of the Company pressed for a public statement of the Dutch case; Grotius revised the twelfth chapter of the manuscript into a standalone quarto; and it appeared in April 1609, without his name on it, while the Republic and Spain were concluding the Twelve Years' Truce and the question of Dutch access to the Indies was on the negotiating table.

Set that sequence out and it is a very clean specimen of how a justification gets made. A commercial act generates a legal problem. The interested party retains an advocate. The advocate produces a comprehensive brief. The brief is filed away, and the single chapter that serves the immediate diplomatic purpose is extracted, polished, published without attribution so that the state can disclaim it, and timed to a negotiation.

What the argument said

The pamphlet's thirteen chapter headings set out the case as a lawyer's case, which is what it is. That by the law of nations navigation is free to all men over all waters. That the Portuguese have no right of dominion over the Indies by title of discovery, nor by title of papal donation, nor by title of war. That neither the sea nor the right of navigating it is Portuguese by title of occupation, of papal donation, or of prescription and custom. That by the law of nations trade is free between any parties whatever. That commerce with the Indies is not the Portuguese monopoly on any of the same grounds. That there is no equity in the Portuguese prohibiting commerce. And, last, that the Batavians must retain their right to the Indian trade — by treaty, by truce, or by war.

The reasoning underneath is what made the book permanent. The sea, like the air, cannot be brought into ownership, because it cannot be exhausted by use and cannot be occupied; things that nature has made common to all remain common. The right to travel and to trade with willing partners belongs to men as men, not as subjects of a

particular crown. A papal grant cannot convey what the Pope does not own. And discovery confers nothing where the land discovered already has inhabitants who govern themselves, because — the argument requires this, and Grotius states it — the peoples of the Indies are not chattels; they are self-governing communities with the capacity to hold property and make treaties, and the Portuguese cannot own them any more than the sea.

That last is the part worth pausing on. In order to break the Iberian claim, the Company's advocate had to establish that Asian rulers were genuinely sovereign and Asian peoples genuinely free — that they were principals, capable of choosing whom to deal with. It is one of the more remarkable propositions in the history of European legal writing, it was true, and it was purchased.

What the Company did

Twelve years after the pamphlet appeared, the man who founded Batavia went to the Banda islands, killed or enslaved or expelled substantially the whole population, and installed a system under which the world's only nutmeg groves were farmed by Company grantees using imported slaves. In the Moluccas the Company conducted annual expeditions to cut down clove trees outside the districts it controlled, so that no clove should grow anywhere it could not be counted. It closed the archipelago's carrying trade to everyone but itself, licensed the shipping of Asian merchants under passes, seized what sailed without them, and by the 1670s was writing monopolies on rice and export commodities into treaties with Javanese sovereigns.

The freest sea in the literature became the most comprehensively closed sea in the world, and the two facts issue from the same organisation within a single lifetime.

It is easy, and cheap, to call that hypocrisy, and it obscures how the thing actually worked. Read the pamphlet again for what it does *not* say. It does not say that monopoly is wrong. It says that the *Portuguese* have no title — not by discovery, not by donation, not by war, not by prescription. It is an argument against a particular claim of right, by a party with a competing interest, in a specific dispute. The positive Dutch case, from the beginning and consistently thereafter, was that the Company's exclusive rights rested on contracts freely made with sovereign local rulers — which is precisely the ground Grotius had cleared by establishing that those rulers were sovereign and could contract.

The Company therefore never had to abandon its own doctrine. It had only to produce a treaty. And it spent the next two centuries producing treaties, of the kind examined in the previous module, in which a prince cedes an exclusive right to a

Company that has just restored him to his throne, or a dying man conveys his realm of his own free and unconstrained will.

The argument was a brief, not a creed, and the correct question to ask of any robe is not what it affirms but what it was retained to defeat. Grotius was retained to defeat the Iberian title. He defeated it completely and permanently, and nothing in the victory obliged his client to anything.

The robe the licensor wrote

Grotius was the Company's advocate. But the primary statement of what the enterprise was *for* was written not by the Company but by the body that licensed it, and it is worth reading because of what it contains and much more because of what it does not.

The charter of 20 March 1602 opens:

> *"Aangezien de welstand der vereenigde Nederlanden principaalyk is bestaande in de navigatie, handeling en commercie, die uit de zelve landen van alle oude tyden gedreven, en van tyd tot tyd loffelyk vermeerdert zyn..."*

Since the welfare of the United Netherlands consists principally in navigation, trade and commerce, which have been driven from these same lands from all ancient times and have been from time to time praiseworthily increased...

and continues that certain principal merchants, lovers of navigation and trade with foreign lands, had lately at great cost, trouble and peril taken in hand *"die zeer loffelyke navigatie, handeling, en traffique op de Oostindiën"* — that most praiseworthy navigation, trade and traffic to the East Indies; that rival companies had sprung up in Zeeland, on the Maas and in the North Quarter; and that the States-General, having considered how much it mattered to the United Provinces and their good inhabitants that this trade should be conducted, maintained and increased *"onder een goede generale ordre, politie, correspondentie, ende gemeenschap"* — under one good general order, government, correspondence and community — had agreed and confirmed the union of the companies

> *"tot bevordering van den welstant der vereenigde Landen, eensamentlyk het profyt van alle de ingezetenen der zelve... uit souveraine magt ende authoriteit."*

for the promotion of the welfare of the United Provinces, together with the profit of all the inhabitants thereof... out of sovereign power and authority.

Now the absences, which are total.

The word religion does not appear in the charter of 1602. Neither does Christendom, nor church, nor faith, nor God. There is no mission. There is no civilising claim of any kind: no undertaking to bring law, or peace, or order, or improvement to anybody in Asia. The inhabitants of the East Indies appear in the document only as the far end of a shipping route. The whole of the stated purpose is that the prosperity of the Netherlands rests on trade, that this particular trade is praiseworthy and profitable, that competition among Dutch companies is wasteful, and that a single well-ordered company is therefore in the public interest.

Compare the instrument that Charles II would grant the English company sixty-nine years later, which authorised war "with any prince or people, that are not Christians" — a clause that sorts the world confessionally and licenses violence on that basis. The Dutch instrument does no such sorting. It is a commercial rationalisation, drafted by merchants and lawyers for merchants and lawyers, and it is silent about everything except money and order.

This is a robe with no clothes in it for the conquered, and the point is not that the Company was worse than its rivals for having none but that it did not think it needed one.

The clause that arrived in 1622

Except that twenty years later it acquired one, and the date is the finding.

The charter ran for twenty-one years from 1602. When it came up for renewal in 1622 the Company's position at home was under attack from several directions at once: the participants were petitioning the States-General for a proper audit of accounts they had never seen, the promised ten-yearly reckoning had been quietly merged away, and there were pamphlets. The renewed charter granted in that year added, among its provisions, that the conservation of the public religion was to be one of the Company's duties.

Nothing in the Indies had changed to require it. What had changed was that the licence was up for decision, and the body deciding was a Republic in the middle of the fiercest confessional quarrel of its history — the Arminian controversy had been settled at Dordt only three years earlier, the Advocate of Holland had been executed in 1619, and Grotius himself was at that moment a fugitive, having escaped from Loevestein in a book-chest in 1621 after being sentenced to life imprisonment for his part on the losing side.

So the Company's justification acquired a religious duty at the precise moment its charter needed votes in a body whose majority had just won a religious war. That is not

cynicism on anyone's part; it is what a renewal negotiation does to a document. But it tells you exactly where the robe was pointed.

The church that resulted

The duty was discharged, and the shape of the discharge is as revealing as the clause.

Over the two centuries of its existence the Company employed something in the order of six hundred and fifty ministers and two thousand *ziekentroosters* — comforters of the sick, a lay office that read prayers and catechised — together with a larger number of Asian schoolmasters. It paid their salaries and their passages, and it controlled them: the consistories at Ambon, Batavia, Colombo, Malacca, the Cape and Formosa corresponded with the central church council at Batavia, which corresponded with the classes at home. Catholic worship was prohibited in Company territory; when the Dutch took the Portuguese fort at Ambon in 1605, Catholic missionaries were forbidden the Moluccas.

But the direction of the effort was inward. The great congregation at Batavia was composed mainly of Europeans and Eurasians — a chaplaincy for the Company's own servants and their households, not a mission to the country. Where conversion did occur among Asian populations it occurred in Ceylon and in the eastern archipelago, above all at Ambon, and it followed the flag rather than leading it. The Company's armed force was used from time to time to protect existing Christian populations from their neighbours; it was not used to make new ones. The specialist judgement — the phrase used in the literature is that this was a trade church, a handmaiden — is that the Company had no missionary zeal, that its interest was commercial, and that where it did support mission it did so because a mission produced political stability.

And in Java, which is the subject of this study, the answer is very nearly nothing at all. Protestantism reached the Java coast through the Company's port towns, and only from the eighteenth century, and only in those towns. Nobody attempted the interior. Nobody attempted the courts. The Islam of Java was met by the Company as a fact about the counterparty, like the monsoon.

What was said to the Javanese

There remains the question of whether the Company said anything to the people it ruled, and the honest answer is that it said things to their princes and nothing to them.

The language exists and it has already appeared in this study. In the treaties the Company is *wettige heer en souverain*, lawful lord and sovereign. At Giyanti in 1755 the parties undertake that there shall reside for all time a sincere friendship and harmony

between the subjects of the Company and the peoples of Java, each aiding the other in every need, *"even alsof zij één volk waren"* — just as if they were one people. A sultan receives his lands and his dignity, in the first person, *"met de uiterste dankbaarheid... als eene singuliere gunst"* — with the utmost gratitude, as a singular favour.

That is a robe of a kind. It is cut for princes, in the idiom princes used, and it does the work princely formulae do: it converts a defeat into a relationship and gives the defeated party a form of words he can repeat at his own court without dishonour. It is not nothing, and the men who signed it were not fools for signing it.

But it is addressed to perhaps a few dozen people in the whole of Java. Below the level of a regent, no Javanese was ever told anything by this order about why it was entitled to what it took. There was no proclamation to the villages, no catechism, no school, no story. The reason is structural and was set out in the previous module: the Company bought an output and left the extraction sealed. It did not need the cultivator's consent, because it never dealt with him. It dealt with a regent who delivered coffee, and what the regent said in the villages was the regent's own affair and used the regent's own authority, which was Javanese and ancient and required no Dutch justification whatever.

An order that extracts through an intermediary does not need to justify itself to the people the intermediary extracts from — and will therefore not build the apparatus that would let it. That absence is not an oversight. It is the saving that made the arrangement cheap, and it is the same absence that will make the accounting impossible.

And nothing for the owners either

The last audience to check is the one that paid for all of it.

The participants of the Company — any inhabitant of these lands who wished to subscribe, with as little and as much money as pleased him — received no meeting, no vote, no right of inspection, and no account. The general reckoning promised for 1612 was not held. Isaac Le Maire's remonstrance of January 1609 charged the directors with enriching themselves and with manoeuvring so that shareholders could not withdraw as the charter allowed. The petition of 1622 for an audit was refused. The Company published only the most rudimentary financial statements and its books remained closed for the whole hundred and ninety-seven years of its life. There was no annual report, no defence of policy to the shareholders, no account of the Banda campaign to the men whose capital had paid for it.

What the participants got instead was a dividend, and a price on the Amsterdam exchange at which they could leave whenever they wished.

An apex that is paid does not have to be persuaded. The whole apparatus of self-justification that a landed or an office-holding elite requires — the story of why the arrangement is right, told over and over until it is simply how the world is — was unnecessary here, because the owners' relation to the enterprise was a payment and a quotation. A robe is what you offer a man who could withdraw his support. A man who can sell his position at a keystroke, at a price that tells him everything he needs to know, does not require one.

Nor did the soldiers. The floor of this order was recruited, as the first module showed, from among the poorest men in the German lands, at a wage no better than home service, with a two-in-three chance of never returning; they were not given a cause and did not need one, because what held them was the absence of an alternative and the Company's monopoly of the passage home.

So who was the robe for?

Assemble the audiences and only one of them can do anything.

The Javanese population was never addressed. The Javanese princes were addressed in the idiom of princes and could, at most, make war — which several of them did, and lost. The participants were paid rather than persuaded and could sell but not vote. The soldiers were bought. The chambers were the Company. The provincial States chose directors from lists the chambers drew themselves.

That leaves the States-General, which granted the *octrooi*, held the reversion when it expired, decided the Company's internal deadlocks under Article VI, received the oath of fidelity of every governor and soldier the Company appointed, confirmed those appointments on the return of every fleet, and had taken twenty-five thousand pounds' worth of participation in the enterprise on the day it licensed it.

And the robe points there, in both of its major additions, at exactly the moments when that body had a decision to make. *Mare Liberum* is published anonymously in April 1609, in the weeks around the conclusion of a truce whose terms would determine whether Dutchmen could sail to Asia at all. The duty of conserving public religion is written into the charter in 1622, at renewal, before a Republic that had just fought itself to a standstill over religion.

This is the reversed robe, and Java sharpens the account of it. The prediction the collection has carried is that a colonial justification is cut for the metropole, whose belief funds and mans the conquest, rather than for the conquered, whose belief the floor does not require. That is right about the direction and imprecise about the target. The metropole here did not fund the conquest out of belief — it funded it out of a subscription paid back in dividends — and did not man it out of belief either. **What**

the metropole supplied was permission, and permission is the thing a licence-holder must keep renewing. The robe was therefore cut not for the funders and not for the fighters but for the revoking authority, which in this case was a different body from either.

Reading the robe against the framework

Three refinements.

First: the robe is addressed to whoever holds the power of revocation, and where the licensor, the funder and the fighter are different parties, only the first of them gets a story.

The general form of the finding is a research instruction and it is testable. Identify, for any order, which party could end the arrangement by decision rather than by war. Then date every major addition to the order's public justification and ask what that party had before it in that year. Here the two great additions — the published legal case of 1609 and the confessional duty of 1622 — fall on a truce negotiation and a charter renewal respectively, which is not a coincidence and is not concealed. The funders received cash and no explanation. The soldiers received a wage and no explanation. The conquered received nothing at all below the level of a prince. Everything the order said, it said to the body that could take the licence away.

Second: where an apex is paid rather than persuaded, the robe at the top is not merely reversed but absent — a dividend substitutes for a belief.

This matters for the whole architecture and it is the reason the shareholder question in this case had to be asked from the exit rather than from the constitution. The men who owned the Dutch East India Company for two centuries were never told what it did. They were not told about Banda, or the clove expeditions, or the cost of the Javanese wars, and they did not press, because the instrument they held converted the entire question into a number they could read on the exchange every day and act on in an afternoon. A stake that can be sold at a public price is a stake that requires no story about itself.

The instruction is that liquidity at the apex substitutes for justification at the apex, and that the substitution is stable — it does not decay the way an unpersuasive story decays, because there is nothing there to disbelieve. What such an apex will eventually fail to do is not believe; it is *notice*.

Third: a commissioned justification is a brief, and should be read for what it was retained to defeat rather than for what it appears to affirm.

Mare Liberum is the most celebrated statement in European letters of the freedom of the seas and the universal right of commerce, it was written for a company that

would build the tightest closed trade in the world, and there is no contradiction, because it was never a statement of what the Company believed the world should be. It was an attack on a rival's title, and it left the buyer entirely free to acquire by contract what the seller had failed to acquire by discovery. The Company's positive case — that its exclusive rights rested on agreements with sovereign princes — required exactly the sovereignty of those princes that Grotius had established.

Read every robe for its target rather than its principles, and a great deal of apparent hypocrisy resolves into ordinary advocacy. That resolution is not an exoneration. The point of noticing that the argument was a brief is not that its client was therefore honest but that its client was never bound — and an order whose justification binds it to nothing is one that can do anything and still be, on its own account, in the right.

A note on sources.

The primary quotation in this module is exact and its provenance is uneven; each chain is stated.

The charter of 20 March 1602 is quoted from the text printed by François Valentijn in *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* (1724) — the preamble, and the confirmation *uit souveraine magt ende authoriteit*. As recorded previously, **Valentijn modernised the Dutch of 1602 and added the article numbers himself**, and the passages should be collated against the original manuscript, scans of which are held by the Nationaal Archief. The statement that the words religion, church, faith, Christian and God are absent from the charter is based on a search of that same Valentijn text and is therefore a statement about Valentijn's rendering; **it has not been verified against the 1602 original**, and since Valentijn was abridging as well as modernising, it should be before it is leaned on. The independent confirmation used here is Leonard Blussé's finding, cited in the specialist literature on the Company church, that the first charter made no reference to religion while the charter of 1622 made the conservation of public religion one of the Company's duties.

Mare Liberum is quoted from the Elzevier printing held by the Internet Archive — the dedication *Ad principes populosque liberos orbis Christiani* and the title *De iure quod Batavis competit ad Indicana commercia*. **The scan used is the 1618 Elzevier issue, not the first edition of 1609**, and its optical character recognition of early seventeenth-century type is poor. For that reason **no passage of the body text is quoted here**; the thirteen chapter arguments are given in paraphrase from the table of contents and from the standard modern accounts, and anyone wishing to quote

Grotius directly should use Feenstra's critical edition of 2009, which collates the authorised edition against the autograph manuscript.

The treaty formulae — *wettige heer en souverain*, *even alsof zij één volk waren*, *met de uiterste dankbaarheid... als eene singuliere gunst* — are as quoted and sourced in the previous module, from Stapel's *Corpus Diplomaticum*.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Martine van Ittersum and Peter Borschberg for the composition and political setting of *De Jure Praedae* and *Mare Liberum*: the seizure of the *Santa Catarina* in February 1603, Grotius's retention by the Company in 1604 at the age of twenty-one, the manuscript's suppression and its rediscovery at a family sale in 1864, the Zeeland chamber's role in pressing for publication in 1608, and the anonymous appearance in April 1609 in the context of the truce negotiations. Leonard Blussé for the religion clause of 1622. The figures for the Company church — some six hundred and fifty ministers, two thousand comforters of the sick, the network of consistories reporting to Batavia, the prohibition of Catholic worship in the Moluccas from 1605, the concentration of Asian conversion in Ceylon and the eastern archipelago, and the judgement that the Company's interest in mission was political rather than religious — are from the standard reference literature and from J. J. A. M. Kuepers's work on the Formosan church.

Contested figures and unresolved points. The proceeds of the *Santa Catarina* are given in the literature at figures around three million guilders and the comparison with the Company's subscribed capital is approximate; **no precise figure is adopted here**. The Company's total ministerial employment over two centuries is a round figure from a reference work and has not been traced to the underlying archival count. The claim that Protestantism made essentially no headway in Java before the eighteenth century, and then only in the Company's port towns, follows the standard accounts and would repay checking against the Batavia consistory records.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish what was said to Javanese populations by Javanese intermediaries in the Company's name, which would require Javanese-language sources — the *babad* above all — and which is the obvious place where a justification for the arrangement might have existed in a form the Company neither wrote nor read. And the argument that the robe's additions track the licensor's decision points is drawn here from two instances, 1609 and 1622; two instances make a pattern worth stating and not a demonstration, and the charter renewals of 1647, 1665, 1696 and after should be examined for the same effect before the finding is treated as secure.

A Mosque and a Surau at Tegalrejo

Module 4 · Formation — who reached the Javanese child, in what order, and with what; why the Company reached none of them; and the one population it did form, which was its own, and which it formed Asian.

The estate three kilometres west of the capital

In 1793 a woman of about sixty left the court of Yogyakarta because she disapproved of it.

Her name was Ratu Ageng. She was the widow of Mangkubumi — the prince who had fought the Company for nine years, who had received half of Mataram from it as a fief at Giyanti in 1755 and declared in the first person that he took the dignity with the utmost gratitude as a singular favour, and who had reigned thereafter as the first Sultan of Yogyakarta. She had commanded his corps of female bodyguards. She was descended from religious teachers. When her son succeeded and his court proved frivolous and slack in observance, she went out to an estate she had established at Tegalrejo, three kilometres west of the walls, where she grew rice and traded the produce as far as the north coast, and where she built a mosque and a *surau* — a prayer house — for worship, and so that the children of the district could learn religion.

In the same year she took her seven-year-old great-grandson out of the women's quarters of the palace and brought him to live with her. He had been born just before dawn on a Friday *Wage*, the eleventh of November 1785. She kept him until she died in 1803, when he was eighteen. On the estate he mixed with the farming families, practised asceticism and meditation, studied with the teachers and the senior *santri* who came and went, and read — the old Javanese literature, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, and alongside them the *Tajus Salatin* of Bukhari al-Jauhari, a seventeenth-century Sufi of Aceh, on the right ordering of power under Islam.

He carried that last book with him through the war.

In July 1825, after Dutch surveyors drove stakes for a road through the Tegalrejo estate and across ground where his ancestors were buried, and after a column of fifty men with two guns was sent to arrest him, he withdrew south to Selarong and declared himself Erucakra — another name for the Ratu Adil, the Just King, the figure Javanese prophecy expected to come and set the world right. The war he began ran five years, drew in most of central Java, and cost, on the conventional range, somewhere between

a hundred and fifty and two hundred thousand Javanese lives and something like eight thousand European ones. It nearly ended the colony, and the settlement that followed it produced, within five years, the system of forced cultivation that is the subject of a later module.

No Dutchman in Java knew what had been assembled at Tegalrejo between 1793 and 1803, and no instrument the Company or its successor held gave them any purchase on it whatever. This module is about why.

What is actually being asked

The question in this module is not what schools anyone built. Schooling is a late, thin and largely optional layer. The question is who got to the child first.

A person acquires almost everything he believes from other people, on trust, because a life is too short to check more than a fragment of it; and he learns very early, and mostly without noticing, which people to take it from. Whose word counts. What a good man looks like and what a coarse one looks like. Where he stands in relation to everyone else. What is beyond argument. What story he is inside, who its heroes are, and what the world is for. All of that gets laid down before the faculty that would examine it has finished growing, and it is then buried under everything a life is subsequently built on. It can be revised later — people do revise it, constantly and at great cost — but revision means moving to some other set of people one has come to trust, not stepping outside trust altogether, and it is never the default.

So the question to put to a conquest is: **who reached the children, and what did they install?** It has an answer in every society, always, because there is no such thing as an unformed person. A child nobody forms is not a free child; he is feral. If a conquering power declines to do this work, the work does not stop being done. It goes on being done by whoever was doing it before, in the same buildings, on the same endowment, at the same hours.

In Java the answer is unusually legible, because almost nothing about it changed for two and a half centuries.

What reached the Javanese child, in order

First, the grammar. Javanese is not a language in which one may choose to be polite. It has speech levels — the system Javanese calls *unggah-ungguh basa* — running from *ngoko* through *madya* to *krama*, with a further honorific vocabulary above that, and they are not registers of tone but different words for the same things. To say "eat," or "sleep," or "you," a speaker must first settle what he is to his hearer. And in the

ordinary household the usage is asymmetrical: the mother addresses the child in *ngoko*, the child answers her in *krama*. The child does not learn a doctrine that the world is ranked and that he is below his mother in it. He learns it as the price of being understood, at two and three years old, in the act of acquiring speech at all.

Nothing that arrives later can compete with that for depth, and nothing a foreign power might do can touch it. A ruler can close a school. He can burn books, forbid an assembly, exile a teacher. He cannot forbid a grammar, because a grammar is not transmitted by an institution he could seize; it is transmitted by mothers, in the dark, to infants, and the only way to stop it is to stop the language, which requires a scale and a ruthlessness this Company never remotely possessed and never wanted.

Second, the day he was born. A Javanese child's birth is registered against two cycles running at once — the seven-day week and the five-day market week — which intersect to make a cycle of thirty-five days. The combination is his *weton*: Friday *Wage*, in Diponegoro's case, and the fact is recorded in the first line of his own chronicle. From it follow judgements about his character, the days on which he should undertake things, and whom he may suitably marry.

This is worth holding beside the opening of this study. The calendar that yields those judgements is the one Sultan Agung decreed in 1633, which kept the Indic year-number and took the Islamic month-frame and therefore counts from no event at all. A conquest naturalised so completely that a hundred and sixty years later it silently determines what kind of person a prince is understood to be, in a document he writes about himself.

Third, the shadow play. *Wayang kulit* is performed through the night at births, at weddings, at circumcisions, at the rituals that mark a house or a harvest — which is to say at the occasions where the whole community, including every child in it, is present and awake for as much of it as they can manage. The stories are the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, brought from India a thousand years earlier and worked over ever since into something specifically Javanese, with local cycles and branch-tales grown onto the trunk. Tradition credits Sunan Kalijaga, one of the nine saints held to have Islamised Java, with turning the form to Islamic ends, and dalangs have carried prophet-stories and Sufi allegories on the same puppets.

What the performance installs is a cast. Arjuna, who is refined and self-controlled. Rahwana, who is ambition. Semar — a Javanese addition to the Indian material, a squat and flatulent servant of the heroes who is also a god in disguise, and through whom the audience is told that the coarse and the low may be the truest thing in the story. The Javanese distinction between *halus* and *kasar*, the refined and the coarse, which orders everything from a gesture to a dynasty, is learned here, in the dark, by a

child too young to be told it in propositions, from figures he will recognise for the rest of his life.

Fourth, the mosque, the prayer house and the teacher. Beside the epic cycle, and interwoven with it rather than opposed to it, ran the Qur'anic formation: the child sent to the village *langgar* to learn recitation, the older boy who left home to live with a *kyai* in his *pesantren* and study under him for years, the wandering *santri*, the teacher whose word on what God required was not a claim to be weighed but the thing weighing was done with.

And this apparatus was endowed. The Javanese state had for centuries granted *perdikan* — village land held free of the state's demand, attached to a mosque, a tomb or a religious establishment, and assigned to the men who taught and prayed and kept the graves. That is a public endowment of formation, made by the Javanese order out of its own revenue, generations before any Dutchman had an opinion about it. And nothing in the settlement examined two modules ago touches it. The Company took a coastal strip six hundred rods deep, the customs of Semarang, the teak of Rembang, the sovereignty of Mataram itself, and quotas of coffee — and left every acre of *perdikan* exactly where it was, because its instruments were about harbours and deliveries and it had no reason to look.

Fifth, what all of it added up to. M. C. Ricklefs's account of the result — the thing he calls the mystic synthesis, settled by around the early eighteenth century and dominant through the nineteenth — is of a Javanese identity that was Islamic, that observed the five pillars, and that also took the local spirit world to be real; not a compromise between two things but a single working world in which they were not felt to be in competition. And his observation about its distribution is the one that matters most here: politically, pre-modern Java was riven, with rival centres destroying each other in one bloody war after another. In this, it was not divided. Farmers, traders and the nobility prayed together on Fridays in the same mosque. The shadow plays drawn from the Indic epics were appreciated by everybody.

Hold that against what the Company had spent a century doing. It had split Mataram in two at Giyanti in 1755 and carved a third principality out of Surakarta in 1757. It had made and unmade susuhunans, exiled a claimant to Ceylon, exiled another to the Cape, and required every man holding authority in the interior to come to Semarang and swear an oath before its governor. It could divide the polity as often as it liked. It never divided this, and never tried, and would not have known where to start.

What the Company put against it

Nothing. Across two and a half centuries in Java, essentially nothing.

The Company employed ministers and comforters of the sick in numbers, as the previous module recorded, but they served its own congregations, and the conversions that did occur in its territories occurred in Ambon and Ceylon rather than on Java. It ran schools in Malay in the eastern archipelago. In Java it built no system for Javanese children, taught no Javanese population its language, and made no attempt on the *pesantren*, the *langgar*, the *dalang*, the calendar or the grammar. After it had established itself politically it adopted a policy of restriction and surveillance towards Islam, which Raffles noted and which is the characteristic behaviour of a power that has decided to watch something it cannot alter. The schools that would eventually train the sons of regents belong to a later period than this study covers.

The reason is not indifference and not stupidity, and reading it as either misses the structure. Go back to the settlement. The Company bought an output: a stated quantity of coffee delivered at a stated place, with no tax beyond it, no survey, no assessment, and no enquiry into what the regent took from the villages. It therefore never dealt with a Javanese cultivator, never needed his consent, and never needed him to believe anything at all. What it needed was that a regent should still be there next season with the coffee, and it had bought that with heritability.

A formation system is the most expensive thing a ruler can build, and it only pays when you need a population's belief rather than a counterparty's compliance. This order did not need belief. It needed deliveries.

And there was a second reason, of the kind that recurs wherever Europeans governed people they did not intend to admit. To form Javanese as Dutchmen — to give them the language, the law, the schooling, the whole apparatus by which a person is made a member — is to raise, unavoidably and by the same act, the question of what they are then owed. A man formed as a member has a claim to be treated as one. The cheapest way to avoid the claim is not to make the man.

So the Company withheld, and the withholding was rational at every step, and it produced the result that withholding always produces: **the formation that was running went on running, and the population the Company declined to form got formed anyway, by the people who had been doing it all along, in institutions the Javanese state had endowed and the Company had not thought to touch.**

There is no gap. There was never going to be a gap. The only question was who filled it, and the answer had been settled before the first Dutch ship rounded the Cape.

The one population the Company did form, and which way it ran

And now the finding, which is the reverse of what the structure predicts and which the evidence is quite clear about.

The Company shipped men. Overwhelmingly men: soldiers, sailors, clerks, ship's surgeons, junior merchants, of whom two in three never went home. It did not ship families and it barely shipped women. What that produces at the far end of the voyage is a European male population that forms households with local women — Javanese, Balinese, Bugis, Malay, Indian, and increasingly the locally born daughters of earlier such households — served by slaves bought from across the archipelago and the Indian coasts, and raising children in those households.

Jean Gelman Taylor's study of Batavian society traced what came out of it: a distinct Indo-Dutch culture, running through the female line, in which the European elite of Dutch Asia acquired the language, the dress, the food and the domestic habits of the Asian women who ran their houses. The households spoke Malay and Portuguese. The women wore the *kebaya*. Dutchmen took up betel. Visitors from Europe complained about the habit, acquired from women raised in Asia, of bathing several times a day. Children were carried and fed and put to sleep and told stories by slave nursemaids and by mothers whose first language was not Dutch, and the men who were nominally the heads of these households were mostly absent, frequently dead, and in any case not the people who had the child in the years that count.

Set that beside what a formation is and the conclusion is unavoidable. The Company had, in Java, exactly one population whose childhoods it controlled — the children of its own servants — and that population was formed, in its first and most durable years, by Asian women, in Asian languages, on Asian habits, inside the ruling city of the Dutch empire in the East.

That the effect was real is shown by the reaction to it. When British and then nineteenth-century Dutch officials arrived with newer ideas about what a European was supposed to be, they found the Batavian elite's Malay speech, dress and domestic manners embarrassing and set about separating the Eurasian women of the colony from what were described as their native inclinations. The line between European and Asian, which the later colonial state would police so anxiously, had to be *constructed* in the nineteenth century precisely because the seventeenth and eighteenth had let it blur — and it had blurred at the hearth, where such things blur, and not in any policy.

An order that declines to form the people it rules does not thereby remain unformed itself. Formation is not a service a state may choose to provide or withhold; it is what happens to every child alive, and the direction it runs in is decided by who is in the room. Where the ruling group refuses to run one outward, and simultaneously

imports men without families into households staffed by the ruled, the only formation actually operating at the point of contact runs inward. The Company would not make Javanese into Dutchmen. It could not stop Java making its own servants' children into something that was not Dutch either.

1825

Which brings the module back to Tegalrejo, and to what the two centuries of withholding had produced by the time anyone in Batavia looked.

Consider the content of Diponegoro's formation as the sources give it. Old Javanese literature and the Indic epics — the layer laid down before Islam and never displaced. The *Tajus Salatin* on the ideal Islamic ordering of power, written by an Acehnese Sufi, carried by the prince through five years of war. Al-Ghazali. Ibn Hajar. Asceticism and meditation, practised on a rice estate among farming families. Teachers and *santri* passing through, and a Sumatran *kyai* living nearby. And a great-grandmother who had commanded a corps of women under arms and who disapproved of a court she thought had gone soft on religion.

Both layers, held together without strain, in exactly the proportion Ricklefs describes as the ordinary Javanese settlement of the question — which is the point. Diponegoro was not an exotic. He was a well-formed Javanese of his class and his time, and the war he raised was intelligible to hundreds of thousands of people immediately, because they had been formed on the same materials.

And when he moved, he moved in the vocabulary the formation had supplied. He did not claim the throne of Yogyakarta by descent, though he had a claim; he took the title of the Just King, the figure the prophetic tradition said would come. That is not a political programme translated into religious language for effect. It is what a man raised on that material would think was happening, and what men raised on the same material would recognise without needing it explained.

The trigger deserves its own sentence, because it is a nearly perfect image of the whole relationship. A colonial administration decided to build a road. Its surveyors ran the line across an estate, and through a burial ground. Nobody in the survey party had any way of knowing what they were walking through, because the order they served had spent two hundred years arranging not to need to know anything about the interior lives of the people whose country it was — that arrangement being precisely what had made the enterprise cheap.

Five years and something like two hundred thousand deaths later, the arrangement was still cheap, and still blind, and the formation was exactly where it had been.

Reading formation against the framework

Three refinements.

First: the strongest formative instruments are the ones nobody experiences as instruction, and a conqueror can suppress an institution but not a grammar.

The framework has tended to look for formation where formation is administered — the school, the clergy, the calendar of observances, the story told to children about the founding. Java suggests the search should start lower. The single most powerful thing installed in a Javanese child was not a doctrine at all; it was the requirement to select a speech level before he could speak, which delivered his exact position in a ranked world at the age of two, without a proposition, without a teacher, and without anything a hostile power could confiscate. A calendar of birth-days did something similar for character and destiny; a shadow play did it for nobility and coarseness.

Look for the formation in what the population cannot avoid doing. Speech, reckoning time, the ceremonies that must be held when a child is born and a person is married and a house is built. Instruction can be replaced, because instruction is a thing somebody delivers and somebody else can deliver instead. Practice that is a condition of ordinary life cannot be replaced without replacing ordinary life.

Second: withholding formation does not leave a vacancy — it leaves an incumbent in undisturbed possession, and the incumbent survives political fracture that the political order does not.

This is the point the collection has established elsewhere and Java sharpens in one specific way. The Company divided Java politically about as thoroughly as a country can be divided: two courts out of one kingdom in 1755, a third principality in 1757, the eastern districts annexed, the coast taken, every officeholder sworn at a Dutch port. It achieved all of that. And across every one of those divisions the same formation went on running, unified — the same Friday prayer attended by cultivators and nobles together, the same puppets, the same speech levels, the same calendar, funded by the same tax-free village land.

Political division and formative division are different operations, and performing the first does nothing whatever to the second. A ruler who has split a kingdom three ways and congratulates himself on divide and rule has divided the thing that was visible to him. He has not touched the thing that will produce his enemy, because that was never in the treaty and never in his field of view. The instruction is to check, for any order that boasts of dividing its subjects, what it divided — and to note that a population can be politically fragmented and formatively whole, which is the most dangerous combination available, since it means there are many centres capable of raising a rising and one shared language in which any of them can call the rest.

Third — and this is the case's own contribution: an order that refuses to form the conquered does not stay unformed. Formation runs at the point of contact, and if the only contact is domestic, it runs backwards.

The prediction the collection carries is that a colonial power withholds formation because forming the conquered would mean admitting them, and that the order therefore stays expensive and brittle. Java confirms all of that. But it adds a term that the prediction does not contain, and the term follows from a structural feature of every trading-post empire: the men arrive without women.

A garrison and a factory staffed by single men, in a city where slaves and servants and eventually wives are drawn from the ruled population, is a machine for producing children whose earliest years are managed entirely by the ruled. That is the one formative process in the whole colony that the ruling group actually owned, and it delivered the opposite of what an imperial formation is supposed to deliver: an elite that spoke Malay at home, chewed betel, bathed like Javanese, and had to be forcibly re-Europeanised a century and a half later by newcomers who were shocked by it.

Where a ruling group declines to form the ruled while depending on them for its domestic life, formation does not stop; it reverses. The correct question is therefore not only whether a conqueror forms the conquered, but *who is in the room with his own children* — and in a colony built on shipping men, the answer is almost always the conquered. This is why the racial boundary in such colonies is characteristically a late, anxious, legislated construction rather than an original condition. It has to be built precisely because the households had already dissolved it, in the only place where such things are ever really decided.

A note on sources.

This module contains almost no exact primary quotation, and that absence is itself a finding rather than a failure of research. The subject is what was installed in children by mothers, puppeteers, village teachers and grandmothers, in a country whose rulers kept dynastic chronicles in verse and whose colonial administration kept accounts of coffee. Almost none of it was administered, so almost none of it generated documents; and what documents exist are in Javanese, in *babad* and *suluk* and *serat*, which this study has not been able to read in the original. The module is therefore built on paraphrased modern scholarship and should be read as an argument from that scholarship rather than from the record.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. M. C. Ricklefs for the mystic synthesis — Islamic identity, observance of the five pillars, and acceptance of the local spirit world as the dominant Javanese religious orientation from the early eighteenth

century through the nineteenth — and for the observation that a politically riven Java was in this respect unified, with cultivators, traders and nobility at the same Friday prayer and the Indic shadow plays appreciated across the classes. Peter Carey's biography of Diponegoro for the upbringing at Tegalrejo: the adoption at seven in 1793 by Ratu Ageng, widow of the first Sultan of Yogyakarta and former commander of his female bodyguard; her withdrawal from a court she found irreligious; the rice estate she established and traded from; the mosque and prayer house she built for worship and for the local children's religious instruction; the prince's contact with farming families, teachers and *santri*, and with a *kyai* from Sumatra settled nearby; and her death in 1803. Zamakhsyari Dhofier for the *pesantren* and the role of the *kyai*. Jean Gelman Taylor's *The Social World of Batavia* for the mestizo culture of the Company's capital: the descent of the colonial elite through the female line, the Malay and Portuguese of the households, the *kebaya*, betel-chewing among Dutchmen, the daily bathing that scandalised European visitors, and the later, deliberate effort to separate Eurasian women from what were described as their native inclinations. Soemarsaid Moertono and the standard literature for *perdikan*. The linguistic literature on *unggah-ungguh basa* for the speech levels and their asymmetrical use between parent and child.

The *Babad Diponegoro* — the prince's own account, written in exile, and inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World register — is the obvious primary source for this module and **has not been consulted**. Its opening is reported in the secondary literature as giving his birth in the Yogyakarta *kraton* just before dawn on Friday *Wage*, 11 November 1785, and his adoption at seven in 1793; the *weton* detail is used here on that report. Anyone continuing this study should read the *Babad* and the *Serat Centhini*, which Ricklefs uses extensively and which is the fullest picture available of what an educated Javanese of this period had in his head.

Contested figures. **The mortality of the Java War is given in the sources across a wide band and no figure is adopted here.** The Javanese dead are variously put between about a hundred and fifty thousand and about two hundred thousand, most of them from famine and disease rather than combat; European and Company deaths are usually given at around eight thousand Europeans and a larger number of Indonesian auxiliaries. The date of the road survey through Tegalrejo, the composition of the detachment sent to arrest Diponegoro, and the sequence of 20–21 July 1825 follow the standard accounts.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish the extent of Company or early colonial schooling in Java from the archive; the statement that essentially nothing was built for Javanese children in Java within this study's period rests on the general accounts and on the absence of any such institution in them, which

is weaker evidence than a search of the Batavia church and government records would provide. And the claim that the Company's own children were formed principally by Asian women is drawn from Taylor's account of household culture and from the demography of a male-only migration; **it is an inference about childhood from evidence about households**, and testing it properly would require the sort of material — nursery arrangements, ages at which boys were sent to Holland, the actual language of the schoolroom in Batavia — that this study has not gone into.

MODULE 5

Ampun Tuwan, My Family Is Poor

Module 5 · The Cost Column — why an ordinary Javanese complied: what he could walk away to, who was actually standing at his door, and why the man he hated was never Dutch.

At the tollgate

A cultivator brings a load to market. On the road there is a *bandar*, a tollgate, licensed to a Chinese tax-farmer under a franchise that has been sold to him by the government. He waits, sometimes for hours, with his load and his animals. When his turn comes the tollkeeper inspects, browbeats, and names a percentage for the right of passage. The peasant, who does not have it, throws himself on the man's mercy: *"Ampun tuwan"* — have mercy, sir — my family is poor. If he refuses to pay he risks having the whole load confiscated.

And there is a further arrangement. The tollkeeper holds land. If a farmer's draught animals stray onto it he is fined; if the fine is not paid the animals are impounded; and at harvest time it was not uncommon for a Javanese farmer to hand over the bulk of his profit in order to rent his own beasts back from the tollgate keeper for long enough to bring in his crop.

This is the level at which this module works. Not the treaties, not the regents, not the Governor-General and Council. A man with a cart, a road, and a licensed stranger standing on it.

Two ronde real

Establish the margin first, because everything else follows from how thin it was.

In March 1808 a Dutch official at Yogyakarta, writing to a colleague at Semarang, reckoned that the annual savings of the poorer Javanese peasant households, after the taxes on the rice harvest had been paid, came to about two *ronde real*. Not their income — what was left over at the end of a year. Two coins.

Four decades later, a rural unskilled labourer in Java earned something in the region of twenty Dutch cents a day, which if he worked every single day of the year without exception would come to about seventy-three guilders. He did not work every day of the year; nobody does; and the agricultural calendar is not built that way.

Against that margin, set the burdens. Under the Javanese order: a share of the rice crop to whoever held the assignment over the household, plus labour service when the

holder called for it, plus the dues attached to being in a village at all. After 1830, under the Cultivation System: the obligation to put up to a fifth of arable land into a government export crop, or to give something on the order of sixty-six days of labour a year, in lieu of the land rent — and on top of that the *heerendiensten*, the corvée for roads and canals and bridges, which was not part of the crop obligation and was not counted against it. And running through the whole period, at every road junction and market, the tollgates.

A household with two coins of margin cannot absorb a bad season, a confiscated load, or an impounded ox. Everything in the cost column happens inside that fact.

The old bargain, and why it was survivable

The governing fact of the Javanese countryside for most of its recorded history is that land was plentiful and people were not.

This is why, as the opening of this study recorded, Mataram measured its lords' wealth in *cacah* — households — rather than in acres. A count of acres is a count of something that cannot run away. A count of households is a count of the thing you can lose. Every Javanese ruler's central administrative problem was retention: keeping cultivators on the ground he claimed, and if possible attracting them off somebody else's.

The consequence for the man at the bottom is the one the comparative literature on peasant societies has established generally. Where labour is scarce and land is not, and where a ruler's means of coercion are limited by distance and by the season, subsistence insurance is more or less the only way to hold a labour force — and so the arrangement tends to include a floor. Not out of benevolence; out of the same arithmetic that makes a farmer feed a working animal. A lord who took so much that his people left had, by that act, reduced his own standing in the only unit that counted.

So there was a real ceiling on the pre-colonial burden, and the mechanism of the ceiling was the peasant's feet. He could go to another lord's district, where he would be received, because another lord wanted *cacah*. He could go to a *perdikan* village, which held its land free of the state's demand. He could go into the forest, or to the pasisir towns, or downcoast to Batavia's hinterland where the Company was actively encouraging settlement, or across to Banten. Java was not a country in which one was trapped.

That is the arrangement the Company found, and the first thing it did about it is instructive.

Not to compel anyone to move out

In the great cession of November 1743 — the one that gave the Company the six-hundred-rod band around the coastline — the Susuhunan of Mataram also bound himself, in the same article, not to compel anybody living inside that band to move out of it and come under his own jurisdiction.

Read what that clause is for. Two sovereigns are dividing a country, and one of the things they have to write down is an undertaking about not drawing off each other's people. The clause exists because the parties both understood that the scarce and contestable commodity in Java was not ground but the population standing on it, and that a boundary is worth nothing if the people inside it can be induced to walk across.

That is the earliest form of what the colonial order would spend the next century and a quarter doing to the cost column, and it was not what one might expect. It did not build walls. It did not chain anybody to a village. It bought the neighbours.

Exit was never closed. It was made pointless.

Here the record refuses the simple story, and the refusal is the finding.

Javanese peasants went on leaving throughout the whole period. They left in the eighteenth century and they left under the Cultivation System, and the colonial archive records them doing it: residents complaining of villages depopulating, cultivators abandoning obligatory plantings and moving on, a steady drift out of the crowded centre of the island. Central Java, which held more than half the Javanese in the early nineteenth century, emigrated persistently — the Java War, the pressure of taxation in the princely lands, and the burdens of the cultivation obligations all pushing people out; East Java's share of the island's population doubled between 1815 and 1930. In Demak and Grobogan in the 1840s, on the accounts drawn from the cultivation reports, many inhabitants left their villages precisely to escape the compulsory planting.

So the exit did not shut. What happened was subtler and more complete. Under Mataram, walking out of one lord's district and into another's meant arriving somewhere with a *different arrangement*, run by a man who wanted you and would bid for you. Under the Dutch, walking out of one village and into the next residency meant arriving somewhere with the *same arrangement*, run by a regent holding the same kind of quota from the same government, paid on the same percentage.

Movement that relocates a man inside the same order is not exit; it is redistribution. It relieves the individual — a village with lighter obligations, better land, a slacker head — and it does not constrain the ruler at all, because nothing the migrant does reduces the total demand or gives anyone an incentive to lower it. The old

ceiling on the burden had rested not on the peasant's ability to move but on the existence of a competitor who profited from receiving him. The Company removed the competitor, not the road.

That is why the extraction could rise so far without the ruler ever having to build a wall, and it is the reason the ordinary comparative question — could the oppressed simply walk away? — has to be asked in two parts. Not only whether he could go, but whether there was anywhere different to arrive at.

Who was actually at the door

Now the central mechanism, and it is the one that explains why this order needed no story about itself.

Trace the demand backwards from the cultivator. The man who tells him what to plant, how much of his land to put into it, and which days he owes is the head of his own village — his neighbour, in most cases a man of the same descent group, holding a position that existed long before any European arrived. That head has received a target from the district head above him. The district head has it from the regent. The regent holds his position, hereditarily and securely, from the colonial government, and — this is the part that makes the machine run — both the regent and the European official above him were paid *cultuurprocenten*: a percentage of the value of the crop produced in their districts. Everyone in the chain from the village head upward had a personal financial interest in the number going up, and the incentive was strongest exactly where the local knowledge was.

So the cultivator never in his life dealt with the Dutch. He dealt with a village head he had known since childhood, under the authority of a Javanese lord whose family had held the district for generations and whose right to command labour and take a share of rice was older than the Company, older than the sultanate, and had never in anyone's memory been in question.

This is what the third module of this study was circling when it found that the order said nothing at all to the Javanese below the level of a prince, and produced no justification, no schooling, no catechism, no story. It did not need one. **A demand does not have to be legitimate; the person making it has to be.** The cultivator was not being asked to accept Dutch sovereignty, or to believe anything about Holland, or to think the arrangement just. He was being asked, by a Javanese, in Javanese, in the *krama* he had used to superiors since he was three years old, to do a thing Javanese cultivators had always done for the men set over them.

An order that keeps a legitimate person standing at every door can run for a very long time on a legitimacy it does not itself possess and has never attempted to acquire.

The neighbours as enforcers

Beneath that sat the second mechanism, which is horizontal rather than vertical and which does most of the work in any village society.

The obligation fell on the village as a body. The head received a target and allocated it: whose land went into cane or indigo, who went to the coffee gardens, who was owed to the road gangs this month. Where land was held communally and periodically redistributed — a pattern that spread considerably during this period — the head's allocation power was also power over a man's subsistence, and a household that would not take its share of the burden could find its share of the fields reconsidered.

And a shortfall by one household did not stay with that household. It fell back on the village, which meant it fell on everybody else, which meant that the pressure on a man who would not plant came first and hardest from the people he had to live among, farm beside, marry his children to, and be buried with. In a settlement of a few hundred people bound by descent, ritual obligation and mutual insurance, this is a formidable instrument, and it costs the state nothing whatever.

Note what the colonial government had to do to obtain it: nothing. It set a quota and a payment schedule and let a Javanese village be a Javanese village.

What he got

The honest accounting requires the benefit side, and there is one, though it is thinner than its defenders claim and less negligible than its critics allow.

The largest item is peace, and it is genuine. From the founding of Mataram to the settlement of 1755, central Java had been fought over more or less continuously — succession wars, rebellions, the Trunajaya rising, the Chinese War, Mangkubumi's nine years — and the characteristic experience of a Javanese village in those decades was an army passing through and living off it. After 1755 the interior stopped being a theatre, and after 1830 it stopped decisively. A cultivator between 1830 and 1870 was, for the first time in the recorded history of his island, unlikely to have his rice taken by soldiers or his village burned in a dynastic quarrel. That is not nothing, and any account that omits it is dishonest.

Second, the crops were paid for. The payments were low — the recurring judgement in the literature is that they were often just about enough to cover the land rent the cultivation was supposed to replace — but they were cash, arriving in a countryside that had had very little, and they did put money into hands that had held none.

Third, some infrastructure was real. Irrigation works expanded the cultivable area and, in places, raised yields; roads were built, at the cost of the corvée that built them.

Fourth, the population grew, and grew fast. Whatever one makes of the baseline dispute set out at the start of this study — Raffles's four and a half million in 1815 against a reconstructed seven and a half million in 1800, against thirty million by 1900 — the direction is not in doubt.

Set against that, the same period's debits at the same level. Land taken out of rice for cane and indigo. Crop failures which the regulations said should be remitted and which frequently were not. Officials at every level paid a percentage on production and therefore incentivised to press. Labour taken at the times of year when a rice cultivator most needs his own hands. And the tollgates, which took a cut of everything he tried to sell.

What refusal cost

For most cultivators, most of the time, refusal did not produce a European soldier. It produced the loss of the good field at the next redistribution, an extra turn on the road gang, the impounded ox, the confiscated load, a beating from the district head's men, and the enmity of a village that would carry the shortfall.

The aggregate cost is harder and is contested. Cirebon residency suffered famine between about 1844 and 1850; Demak and Grobogan in 1849 and 1850. These are the episodes that entered Dutch parliamentary debate and eventually helped end the system. The causation is genuinely disputed in the specialist literature and this study will not pretend otherwise: the detailed work has shown that in Demak and Grobogan the acreage under government tobacco was a small fraction of the cultivated land and the households involved a small minority of the households, so that the compulsory planting cannot carry the whole weight of the disaster, and drought, rice prices, and the collapse of local entitlements have to be given theirs. What is not disputed is that people starved in numbers in the middle of a period of record export surpluses, and that among the responses recorded is that many of them left.

Where the anger went

And now the consequence that the arrangement's designers did not intend and could not see.

The resentment generated by this system was real, sustained and correctly aimed — at the people the cultivator actually met. In the years before 1825, tollgates in the princely lands were being burgled and burned with increasing frequency, and the recorded method is exact: a peasant who wanted revenge on a tollkeeper would enlist local bandits and have the *bandar* plundered or fired. Not a rising, not a petition. A

quiet arrangement with men outside the law to destroy the physical apparatus of the thing that was taking his margin.

The tollkeepers were Chinese. So were the opium farmers, who by the 1820s held the retail at nearly every major tollgate, sub-tollgate and market in the sultanate. Peter Carey's judgement on this is the one to hold, because it is the structural point and not a defence: what had changed in the years after 1816 was not the character of the Chinese but the character of the fiscal regime they were licensed to operate — and for that regime the Dutch administration is answerable. The men in the booths were the visible end of a revenue system designed in Batavia, and they absorbed, in their persons and their buildings, the hatred it generated. Eighty-five years earlier the same displacement had produced the massacre of thousands of Chinese in Batavia in 1740.

An order that extracts through intermediaries does not merely save the cost of extracting directly. It also exports the hatred. That is a second and larger saving, and it has a hidden price: the discontent becomes invisible at the top, because it is not pointed at the top. A government reading its own reports sees prosperous districts, rising deliveries, and occasional criminality directed at tax-farmers. It does not see a country filling up with a grievance it has caused and cannot read, because every visible expression of that grievance is filed under something else.

Somebody saw it

One man did read it, and the record of his reading is among the most eloquent documents this study has encountered.

In June 1824 a Dutch official named Chevallier submitted a report on the working of the tollgates. On the copy in the archive at Jakarta a senior official — possibly the Governor-General himself — later wrote in pencil, in words that reach this study through Peter Carey's translation:

> *"What does the government want with such tax-farmers and their scandalous conduct? Mr Chevallier must become Resident of Banyumas. This report and the refusal to follow it lies at the background of the present disturbances."*

The annotation was made after 20 July 1825, which is to say after the Java War had begun. Chevallier was dead by November of that year. The report had been submitted thirteen months before the rising, it had identified the tollgates as the problem, and it had not been acted on.

The sentence is worth reading twice. It is a colonial government's own senior officer, in his own hand, on his own file, writing that the war which was at that moment

consuming central Java had its origin in a fiscal arrangement his administration had been warned about and had declined to change. Nothing this study can say about the cost column improves on it.

Reading the cost column against the framework

Three refinements.

First: exit constrains a ruler only where the exit leads somewhere different. Where the same arrangement is coextensive with the reachable world, mobility is a private remedy and no constraint at all — and the ruler's efficient move is therefore not to raise the wall but to buy the neighbours.

The collection has treated the availability of exit as one of the terms setting how much an order can take. Java shows that the term has to be specified more carefully, because it supplies both halves of the comparison inside a single country. Under Mataram, exit was a genuine ceiling — not because leaving was easy but because there was a competitor on the other side of the district boundary who wanted households, counted his standing in them, and would bid. Under the colonial order, leaving remained perfectly possible and large numbers of people did it, and it changed nothing, because every district a man could reach was running the same system under a regent paid on the same percentage.

The question is not "could he go?" but "was there a rival arrangement to arrive at?" — and the second question is about the ruler's relations with his neighbours, not about the ruled at all. The 1743 clause in which two sovereigns undertake not to draw off each other's people is the first move in that game; the Cultivation System, applied uniformly across the residencies, is its completion. A cartel among the receivers abolishes the value of flight without anyone having to prevent it.

Second: an order that extracts through intermediaries exports its resentment along with its costs, and thereby loses the ability to read its own danger.

The saving from using intermediaries is usually counted as administrative: no survey, no assessment, no revenue service. Java shows a second and larger saving, which is that the anger produced by the extraction attaches to whoever the cultivator can see. In this case that was a village head, a district head, a regent, and above all a Chinese tollkeeper in a booth on a road. The hatred was real and it was rationally targeted — the man in the booth *was* taking the money — and it never reached the party that had designed the system, licensed the farm, and banked the revenue.

The hidden price is epistemic. Discontent that is aimed at intermediaries appears in the archive as crime, as local abuse, as the misconduct of tax-farmers, as something to be handled by better supervision. It does not appear as a threat to the order, because on

its face it is not one. **An order in this position will believe itself popular, or at least unresented, right up until the grievance arrives in a form it has no category for** — which in Java was a prince declaring himself the Just King and finding that most of central Java understood immediately what he meant.

Third: compliance requires that the person making the demand be legitimate; it does not require that the arrangement be.

This is the finding that resolves the puzzle left by the module on justification. That module found something close to a vacuum: a charter with no religion and no mission, a legal case addressed to the princes of Christendom, a church that served its own congregations, and not one word of explanation offered to any Javanese below the rank of regent in two hundred and fifty years. On the collection's usual expectations that should have produced a brittle and expensive order, and for the men in the garrison it did. At the level of the village it did not, and the reason is that the question of legitimacy was never posed at that level in the form the framework assumes.

A cultivator does not assess the constitutional basis of the demand for his labour. He responds to the man in front of him, and the man in front of him was a Javanese with an ancient and unquestioned right to ask — a right laid down in the same childhood that had given him his speech levels and his place in them. The Dutch had bought that man's compliance with heritability, and were then able to draw on a legitimacy they had not built, could not have built, and did not understand.

The instruction is to look at the last link in the chain of demand, not the first. An order can be wholly alien, wholly unjustified, and entirely unbelieved-in at the top, and still run cheaply at the bottom for as long as it can keep a legitimate local face at every point where an order is actually given. What it cannot do is *notice* when that face stops being legitimate — and in Java the face was still legitimate in 1870, which is why the accounting for this order has to be done in a currency other than rebellion.

A note on sources.

The primary material in this module is thin, reaches this study at second hand, and is flagged accordingly; the reasons are structural and were set out two modules ago, since an arrangement designed not to generate information about what it cost does not generate information about what it cost.

The scene at the tollgate — the hours of waiting, the browbeating, the demand for a percentage on the load, the plea *"Ampun tuwan"*, the risk of confiscation, the fine for grazing, the impounding of draught animals and the farmer renting his own beasts back at harvest — is drawn from Peter Carey's account of the tollgate system in the princely lands, which cites the Dutch periodical literature of 1892 for the detail. **The**

underlying source has not been consulted and the Javanese phrase reaches this study through Carey's English text. The estimate that the poorer Javanese peasant household saved about two *ronde real* a year after taxes on the rice harvest is from M. Waterloo at Yogyakarta to N. Engelhard at Semarang, 22 March 1808, cited by Carey to the Dutch colonial archive; **the despatch has not been seen**. The pencil annotation on Chevallier's tollgate report of 15 June 1824 — held in the Arsip Nasional at Jakarta, and attributed by Carey tentatively to the Governor-General — is quoted in Carey's English rendering; **the Dutch original has not been seen, the annotation is undated and unsigned, and its authorship is Carey's inference.** It is load-bearing for the close of this module and should be verified before further use.

The undertaking not to compel anyone living in the ceded coastal band to move out of it and come under the Susuhunan's jurisdiction is from Article 10 of the contract of 11 November 1743, quoted in the earlier module from Stapel's *Corpus Diplomaticum*.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. R. E. Elson's *Village Java under the Cultivation System* for village institutions, land tenure, allocation and the famine analysis; Cornelis Fasseur for the politics of the system and for the *cultuurprocenten* paid to European and Javanese officials on the value of production in their districts; Radin Fernando for the revisionist account of the Cirebon famine of 1844–50; Ulbe Bosma for labour mobility and the migration flows out of central Java; Peter Boomgaard for demography and for food supply and famine; Peter Carey for the tollgate regime and the agrarian world of south-central Java between 1755 and 1825; James C. Scott for the general proposition that where land is abundant, labour scarce and coercion limited, subsistence guarantees are the practical means of attaching a labour force. The formal terms of the Cultivation System — up to a fifth of arable land or something on the order of sixty-six days of labour a year in lieu of the land rent, with *heerendiensten* owed separately — are as given in the standard accounts; the day wage of about twenty Dutch cents for a rural unskilled labourer in the 1850s is from the wage series of de Zwart and van Zanden as cited in the recent work on forced labour and mortality.

Contested points, stated as contested. **The causation of the famines of the 1840s is not settled and no verdict is offered here.** The detailed work on Demak and Grobogan finds the area under government tobacco to have been a small fraction of the cultivated land and the households involved a small minority, which tells against the compulsory planting as sole cause while leaving the mortality and the flight from the villages undisputed; the Cirebon famine has been similarly revised. **Mortality figures for both episodes are not established in this study and none are given.** The proposition that communal tenure with periodic redistribution spread during this

period is Elson's and is itself debated, since some of the apparent spread may be an artefact of colonial officials recording Javanese arrangements in categories of their own.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish the actual size of the burden as a share of a household's product, in any district, in any decade — the single number the accounting will most want, and the one the arrangement was built not to produce. And the argument that the pre-colonial ceiling on extraction rested on inter-lordly competition for *cacah* is an inference from the unit of account and from the general literature on land-abundant agrarian societies; **it is not established from any Javanese record of a lord bidding for another's cultivators**, and the court chronicles and the *serat* literature would be the place to look for one.

MODULE 6

The Favourable Balance

Module 6 · Extraction — what was taken from Java, by what instrument, through whose hands, and why the sum is known to the guilder at one end of the pipe and cannot be stated at all at the other.

The word

The Dutch called it the *batig slot*. It is a bookkeeper's term, and it means the credit balance — the favourable closing figure, the amount by which the account comes out ahead.

For most of the middle of the nineteenth century it was a line in the budget of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and at its height in the 1850s it amounted to something close to four per cent of Dutch national product and rather more than half of everything the Dutch state took in.

Nobody chose that word to conceal anything. It is simply what the thing was, on the page where it appeared: the surplus of colonial revenue over colonial expenditure, transferred home. The whole of this module is contained in the gap between that phrase and what stood behind it, and the gap is not a gap of honesty. It is a gap of measurement, and it was designed in.

Regime one: the Company bought it

For its whole existence the Company's extraction from Java took the form of a purchase.

The instruments were the *contingenten* — quantities of produce owed as tribute under a treaty, without payment — and the *leveranties*, compulsory deliveries at a price the Company itself set. The Priangan arrangement described earlier in this study is the model case: the regents of the Sundanese highlands owed a stated annual tonnage of coffee, the Company levied nothing else in the region, and what the regent took from the villages under him to produce that tonnage was not the Company's affair and was never recorded by it.

Follow the coffee. It is grown by cultivators whose labour nobody counts, on land nobody has surveyed, under a regent who takes his traditional dues in rice and service on top and is paid a commission on delivery. It arrives at a Company warehouse on the coast, where the Company pays the administered price. It is shipped to Amsterdam and

sold at auction at whatever the European market will bear. The difference between the two prices, less freight and establishment, is the profit.

Now look at how that appears in the ledgers, because the point of this module turns on it. It appears as a trading margin. Goods bought at one price, sold at another. There is no entry anywhere in the Company's books for compulsion, because the compulsion happened upstream of the accounting boundary — in a district the Company did not administer, performed by a Javanese lord whose right to command labour predated the Company by centuries, on a population the Company never met.

The books were not false. This study has already recorded the judgement that the Company's accounts, so far as anyone could tell, were accurate. They were also, and for structural rather than dishonest reasons, silent about the entire substance of what they recorded. **A purchase entry cannot hold a coercion; the coercion is on the other side of the counter.**

And it went bankrupt

Which makes the ending of the first regime the most instructive fact in it.

The Company paid dividends averaging something in the order of eighteen per cent of capital for the better part of two centuries. In 1789 the States-General discovered a deficit of some seventy-four million guilders. By the 1780s, after the disastrous Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, debts exceeded a hundred million. It was nationalised on 1 March 1796; the charter was allowed to lapse at the end of 1799; and the state took over both the possessions and the debt, which is given in the literature at figures ranging from something over a hundred million to about two hundred million guilders, the variation depending on what is counted and when.

Two centuries of the highest dividends in Europe, and it died owing more than it had ever distributed.

The reason was set out in the first module of this study, in Coen's own arithmetic: trade cannot be maintained without war, nor war without trade. The Company had bound the two together, and the war side of the equation was the side that grew. Soldiers shipped eighteen thousand miles at enormous cost, of whom two in three never returned. Garrisons from the Cape to Nagasaki. Fleets. The Javanese succession wars, fought four times over, each one paid for out of a cargo. By the end of the seventeenth century the military establishment alone was something approaching ten thousand men, and the Seventeen already regarded it as a burden.

The Company's extraction from Java was real, sustained, and insufficient to cover the floor that made it possible. That is what an expensive conquest looks like in

a set of accounts, and it is the answer to anyone who reads the eighteen per cent as the measure of what the arrangement yielded.

The interregnum, and an instrument that did not fit

Between the Company and the system that followed came twenty years of other people's experiments, and one of them matters here because it failed for a reason this study predicted at the outset.

Daendels raised what he could; the revenue of the Dutch-held part of Java is given at about two and a half million Java rupees in 1805 and about three and a half by 1811. Then the British came, and Raffles brought with him the instrument the English had spent forty years developing in Bengal: a land rent, assessed on measured ground, payable in cash by the cultivator or the village, replacing the whole apparatus of compulsory deliveries with a single tax on land.

It was a coherent instrument and it did not take. There was no survey. There were no registers. There was no cash in the countryside to pay a cash rent with, and no way of establishing what any village's land was worth without building, from nothing, the assessment machinery that Mughal Bengal had handed the English ready-made. Java had counted households, not acres, for as long as it had counted anything; and an instrument calibrated to measure ground, applied to an order that measured people, has to construct its own object before it can tax it.

Which is exactly the fact the next man to try would exploit.

Regime two: leave the fraction, change the base

Johannes van den Bosch arrived as Governor-General in 1830, into a fiscal emergency — the Java War had just cost five years and a fortune, the Belgian revolt had removed a large part of the kingdom's revenue, and the Netherlands was close to insolvent.

His system did not repeal the land rent. This is the thing to hold onto, because it is the whole architecture of the fiction. The land rent stayed. What changed was what it was payable *in*.

Under the arrangement, a village set aside a fifth of its cultivable land for a government export crop — sugar, coffee, indigo, tobacco, tea — and delivered the crop to the government **in lieu of the land rent**. The assessed land rent was the measure of what each village owed. And the regulations carried a promise: if a village's crop, grown on that fifth, came to more than the land rent for which it had been assessed, the village would be free of land rent and would receive the excess.

Read as a fiscal instrument, nothing has been raised. No rate has moved. The peasant owes exactly what he owed before, and may end up better off.

Read as a change of base, everything has moved. The old obligation was a share of what a man grew — a fraction of an output he was producing anyway, for his own purposes, on his own schedule. The new obligation is a fifth of his land, taken out of rice, plus the labour to clear, plant, tend, cut and carry a crop he does not eat, at times of year fixed by the crop's requirements rather than his own, plus — separately and not counted against any of it — the *heerendiensten*, the corvée on the roads and canals the system needed.

The published fraction is the same. The thing it is a fraction of has been replaced.

That is the standing move of a state under fiscal pressure, and it is worth naming as such, because it recurs across this collection: a rate is visible and is argued over and raising it invites the question of by what right, whereas a definition is technical, is settled by the ruler's own officials, and can be extended without any announcement that anything has changed. Van den Bosch's officials did not have to defend a higher tax. They had to explain a new way of paying the same one.

Why the promise could not be kept

The clause about returning the excess is the part that ought to have made the system tolerable, and it was structurally unpayable.

The crops were bought from the peasant at a *plantloon*, a planting payment, which varied by district and by crop and was generally set well below what the produce would fetch. A significant portion of what was paid out came straight back to the government as land tax. Crop failures were supposed under the regulations to be taken into account; on the record they frequently were not, and where they occurred little was remitted. And every administrator in the chain, European and Javanese alike, was paid *cultuurprocenten* — a percentage calculated on the value of the crops produced in his district — so that the entire supervisory apparatus had a direct personal interest in the delivered tonnage being as large as possible and no interest whatever in the excess finding its way back to a village.

A promise that runs against the incentive of every person who would have to execute it is not a promise. It is a design feature of the justification.

The pipeline

What made the second regime work where the Company's had failed was that the crop no longer had to be sold by the party that took it.

The Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij was founded at The Hague on 29 March 1824, on the initiative of King William I, to revive Dutch trade and shipping after the French wars. It was a private company with publicly traded shares. The King was its chief shareholder. From 1826 its Indies operations ran through a branch at Batavia known as the Factorij, and under the Cultivation System it acted, in the standard description, as state banker, merchant and shipping agent all at once: financing the crop, carrying it in Dutch bottoms at agreed rates, and selling it at auction in Amsterdam.

So the completed pipeline runs: cultivator, village head, district head, regent, colonial warehouse, NHM ship, Amsterdam auction, Dutch treasury — with a Javanese aristocracy paid on percentage at one end, a Dutch shipping and textile industry fed at the other, and the King of the Netherlands holding shares in the carrier.

The symmetry with the founding instrument is exact and, so far as this study can tell, unremarked. In 1602 the States-General had taken twenty-five thousand pounds' worth of participation in the Company it was licensing, entered in the equipage to bear profit and risk like any other subscriber. In 1824 the head of state is the principal shareholder in the firm that will carry the produce his own government compels. In both regimes the licensor is an investor in its own licensee, and in neither case did anyone find this worth concealing, because in neither case did anybody think it was a conflict.

Sorted by layer

Every party to the arrangement took something, and each of them took it in a different currency, which is why no single ledger contains the transaction.

The cultivator received the *plantloon*, below market, much of it recovered at once as land tax, and paid partly in a copper coinage of which the intrinsic value was well under its nominal — an additional and unannounced deduction that appears in none of the crop accounts.

The village head received a share and, more valuable, the power to allocate the burden among his neighbours.

The regent received *cultuurprocenten* on the production of his district; retained, untouched, the traditional dues in rice and labour service that had been his before the Dutch arrived; and held his position heritably, guaranteed by a foreign power, which was the thing no Javanese king had ever been able to sell him.

The European officials received *cultuurprocenten* on the same basis, which is to say that the colonial civil service was on commission.

The Chinese revenue farmers received the tollgates and the opium, and took a slice of everything that moved on a road or through a market, under franchises sold to them by the government.

The NHM received the freight and the commission, and Dutch shipping and Dutch textiles received a protected market at both ends.

And the Dutch state received the balance.

This is the shape the collection predicts for a colonial extraction — sorted by caste, with each stratum paid in the coin appropriate to its position — and Java supplies an unusually clean specimen, because the currencies are so different from one another that no accounting system existed, or could have existed, that would have shown the whole thing at once.

What it produced

The physical output is not in doubt. Sugar production rose from about 6,700 tons in 1831 to over 100,000 tons a year by the late 1850s. Coffee rose from about 20,000 tons in 1829 to nearly 55,000 by the same period. Java's population, on the conventional figures for the period of the system's full operation, went from something like six million to something like nine and a half.

The money is where the record breaks down, and it breaks down in an instructive way.

The number, which is four numbers

The figure that entered the literature and stayed there is eight hundred and twenty-three million guilders, transferred from the Indies to the Netherlands treasury between 1830 and 1877. It comes from Conrad van Deventer's polemics at the turn of the twentieth century and it is the number one still meets in general accounts.

A closely related figure of about eight hundred and thirty-two million, deriving from Furnivall, comes with a breakdown of what it paid for at home: something over two hundred and thirty million to the amortisation of the public debt, about a hundred and fifty million to the construction of railways, about a hundred and fifty-five million to tax reductions, and about a hundred and forty-six million to military and other public works.

The modern reconstruction by van Zanden and van Riel, which includes hidden subsidies, gives the peak position rather than the total: at its height in the 1850s, net transfers ran at nearly four per cent of Dutch gross domestic product and accounted for more than half of the Dutch government's revenue.

And the most recent recalculation, arguing that the traditional figure omits categories that plainly came out of Indies income — government expenditure made in the Netherlands on Indies account, and unrequited transfers of capital and assets — puts the strict total at about eight hundred and ninety-seven million for 1831–1870 and about one thousand and fifty-four million for 1831–1877, while a broader definition of the whole colonial surplus reaches something in the region of two and a half billion.

The range therefore runs from roughly eight hundred million to roughly two and a half billion guilders, and the spread is not a disagreement about arithmetic. It is a disagreement about what counts as extraction. That is a finding about the record and it is stated here rather than resolved. Nobody in this literature is fabricating; they are drawing the boundary of the colonial account in different places, and where you draw it decides the answer by a factor of three.

The denominator that was never made

And now the thing this module exists to say.

Everything above is the receiving end, and the receiving end is known with precision, because a treasury counted it. The Netherlands can tell you what came in, in what years, and roughly what it was spent on. The historiography can argue about the boundary of the account to within a few hundred million because the underlying entries exist.

Turn the pipe around and there is nothing. Not a concealed number, not a disputed number — no number.

Nobody ever measured what the extraction cost the people who produced it, in any unit, at any point in two hundred and fifty years. The Company bought an output and deliberately declined to survey, assess or enumerate, because the whole economy of the Priangan arrangement was that it required no administration. The colonial state set quotas by residency and paid its officials a percentage on delivery, and it did not count labour-days, did not measure the fifth against any surveyed total, and had no mechanism for discovering what a village had given up in rice to grow cane. The land rent assessments that were supposed to be the measure were themselves rough and, in many districts, notional.

So the question the framework normally asks of an extraction — what fraction was taken? — cannot be answered for Java, and cannot be answered in principle rather than for want of research. There is a numerator and there is no denominator. And the denominator is missing for exactly the reason the arrangement was profitable: constructing it would have required the survey, the register, the assessors and the

revenue service that this order had, from the first Priangan contract to the last, declined to buy.

The saving and the ignorance are the same fact. The most that can be said, and it should be said plainly, is that between 1830 and 1877 a treasury in Europe received somewhere between eight hundred million and two and a half billion guilders from an island whose inhabitants' side of the transaction was never written down by anybody.

Reading extraction against the framework

Three refinements.

First: the chartered form was a constraint on extraction, not an enabler — and the state that inherited the same island extracted vastly more from it within thirty years by being able to call the same taking a tax.

This is the finding the case was brought in to test, and it comes out the opposite way round from the usual account. The Company is generally treated as the rapacious phase and the state as the moderating one. On the accounts it is the reverse. The Company had to enter everything as a purchase, which meant it had to pay *something*, and it had to carry the cost of its own floor — the garrisons, the fleets, the wars of succession, the two-in-three mortality — on a commercial balance sheet that also had to yield a dividend. It could not tax, because taxing requires a sovereign's apparatus and the whole point of the arrangement was not to buy one. So it bought and sold, and paid for its army out of the margin, and after two centuries it was insolvent.

The state could simply declare an obligation. Van den Bosch did not have to purchase the coffee; he had to reclassify the land rent. The same island, the same crops, largely the same intermediaries, and within a decade the transfers home exceeded anything the Company had distributed in its life.

The instruction is that a chartered body's need to book its takings as commerce caps what it can take, and that the transition from company to state is not a moderation but a removal of a ceiling. Where the collection finds a chartered conquest succeeded by direct rule, the presumption should be that extraction rose.

Second: the base-redefinition move extends to the unit of measurement, not only to the category of the thing taxed.

The collection already holds that a ruler under fiscal pressure adjusts the definition before he adjusts the rate, because a rate is visible and a definition is technical. The instances behind that finding involved reclassifying the *object* — captives read as movable spoils, the subsoil declared already crown property.

Java shows a third variety. Van den Bosch changed neither the rate nor the object: the land rent remained, assessed on the same villages. He changed the *unit in which it*

was rendered — from a cash share of an output the cultivator was producing anyway, to a fifth of his land plus the labour to work it plus the transport, on a calendar set by the crop. The published fraction was untouched and the burden was transformed, because a fifth of land under a crop you do not eat, plus the labour, is a different quantity from a fifth of a crop you were growing regardless.

So the diagnostic sharpens: **when a state's revenue rises without its published rates rising, ask not only what was reclassified but what the obligation is now denominated in.** A change of currency — from output to land, from cash to labour, from a share to a quota — is a rate rise that does not have to be announced or defended.

Third: where an extraction is known to the guilder at the receiving end and unmeasured in principle at the paying end, the standard question has no answer and must be replaced.

This is the hardest thing in the case and it will govern the accounting module. The instinct on meeting a colonial extraction is to ask what proportion was taken, and to treat the absence of an answer as concealment to be penetrated by better archival work. In Java that instinct fails, and it fails for a reason that generalises: an order which extracts through intermediaries and buys outputs rather than assessing revenues *does not generate the measurement in the first place*. The information is not hidden in an archive. It was never created, and it was never created because creating it was the expense the arrangement existed to avoid.

The replacement question is: what did this order decline to measure, and what did the declining buy? In Java it declined to measure labour, land and subsistence, and what it bought was the entire administrative apparatus of a revenue state — the survey, the register, the assessors, the argument about assessment, the salaried service. That is an enormous saving, and it is the reason the *batig slot* exists. The price of it is that neither the men who ran the system nor anybody since can say what it cost, and any account which supplies a figure for the Javanese side of this transaction should be read with the question of where, exactly, the underlying entry was made.

A note on sources.

There is no exact primary quotation in this module, and no primary document has been consulted for it. It rests entirely on paraphrased modern scholarship and on reference accounts, which is a weaker footing than the earlier modules and is stated as such. The archival basis for the material below — the *Koloniaal Verslag* series, the cultivation reports, the NHM records and the Dutch parliamentary proceedings — has not been touched by this study.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Cornelis Fasseur for the politics and finances of the Cultivation System, the *cultuurprocenten* paid to European and Javanese officials on the value of district production, and the finding that crop payments were generally well below market value. R. E. Elson for the observation that a significant share of the *plantloon* returned to the government as land tax. Jan Luiten van Zanden and Arthur van Riel for the estimate, including hidden subsidies, that net transfers at their 1850s peak reached nearly four per cent of Dutch GDP and over half of Dutch government revenue. The production series — sugar from about 6,700 tons in 1831 to over 100,000 by the late 1850s, coffee from about 20,000 tons in 1829 to nearly 55,000 — are as given in the recent economic-history literature drawing on Creutzberg's export volumes. J. S. Furnivall for the breakdown of the transfers by head of Dutch expenditure. The account of the NHM's foundation on 29 March 1824 at the initiative of King William I, his position as chief shareholder, the Batavia Factorij from 1826, and its triple role as state banker, merchant and shipping agent follows the standard company history and reference accounts. The design of the Cultivation System — a fifth of a village's cultivable land, crops delivered in lieu of the assessed land rent, and the undertaking that a village producing in excess of its assessment would be freed of the rent and receive the surplus — follows the standard reference account and **has not been checked against the governing regulations themselves**, which is the obvious next step for anyone continuing this and matters because the exact wording of the surplus clause is the legal fiction at the heart of the system.

Contested figures, given as ranges and not resolved. **The total transferred to the Netherlands is disputed by a factor of about three and no figure is adopted here.** Van Deventer's 823 million for 1830–1877 is the traditional number; Furnivall's is about 832 million; the recent recalculation gives about 897 million for 1831–1870 and about 1,054 million for 1831–1877 on a strict definition of government transfers, and reaches something near 2.5 billion on a broader definition of colonial surplus. The disagreement is definitional, not arithmetical, and the definitional question — what belongs inside a colonial account — is not one this study can settle. **The VOC's debt at dissolution is likewise given variously**, from the deficit of some seventy-four million found by the States-General in 1789, through "over a hundred million" for the 1780s, to about two hundred million assumed by the state; the figure of about 134 million circulates widely and has not been verified here. The eighteen per cent average dividend over nearly two centuries is the standard reference figure and is a percentage of nominal capital, which is not the same as a return on the market value of a share and should not be read as one. Java's population "from six million to nine and a half" during the system's operation is the reference figure and rests on the same disputed

baseline flagged at the opening of this study; the wider range there — Raffles's 4.5 million in 1815 against a reconstructed 7.5 million in 1800 — has not gone away.

Two things this module flags rather than establishes. The copper coinage of reduced intrinsic value, said to have been minted in Holland at about a two-to-one ratio to the old currency and issued in Java, is **reported here on a weak nineteenth-century secondary source and is not verified**; if it holds it is a substantial unrecorded deduction from the cultivator's payment and it deserves proper work. And the central claim of the module — that no measurement of the Javanese side of the extraction was ever constructed — is an argument from the structure of the instruments and from the silence of the literature, not from a systematic search of the colonial archive; it would be refuted by the discovery of any serious contemporary attempt to compute the burden as a share of village product, and anyone continuing this study should look for one before accepting the claim at the strength it is stated here.

MODULE 7

The Coffee and Sugar Machines

Module 7 · Information and Suppression — a set of books nobody saw for a hundred and ninety-seven years, a measurement that was never made, a seam that opened because a constitution changed at home, and a book whose own publisher struck out the dates.

The counting-house

The most famous book ever written about Java opens like this:

"Ik ben makelaar in koffi, en woon op de Lauriergracht, N° 37."

I am a coffee broker, and I live at Lauriergracht, number 37.

The speaker is Batavus Droogstoppel, and he goes on in that voice for a very long time — about his firm, about his respectability, about the unreliability of poets, about the coffee auctions of the Netherlands Trading Society, from which the book takes its subtitle. Java, when it finally arrives, arrives inside a manuscript that a shabby former schoolfellow has left with him, and Droogstoppel keeps interrupting it.

That structure is not a literary conceit. It is a diagram of the thing this module is about. Between a Javanese cultivator and the Dutch public there ran a pipe, and the pipe carried one commodity and one number. Everything else — what the land had grown before, what the labour had cost, who had taken what and by what right — either did not travel or was never put into a form that could travel. The book had to start in an Amsterdam counting-house because that was where the Dutch reader was standing, and the counting-house is the whole of what he could see from there.

The set of books nobody saw

Begin with the Company, where the concealment was deliberate and total.

On 24 January 1609 Isaac Le Maire, a former director and the largest single subscriber, sent the Advocate of Holland a remonstrance against the Company's management: too few ships, borrowing to cover losses, the charter underused, and the directors enriching themselves at the investors' expense, refusing to hear complaints, and manoeuvring so that the promised ten-year reckoning would not fall due in 1612 as the charter allowed. The letter circulated. In 1622, at the charter renewal, shareholders petitioned the States-General for a proper audit.

They did not get one, and nobody ever did. The Seventeen published only the most rudimentary financial information, frequently late. The Company's account books remained closed for the entire hundred and ninety-seven years of its existence.

The scale of that achievement is only visible against what the same society could not suppress. This was a Republic that could not keep Spinoza off the shelves — the *Tractatus* was banned in 1674 and read regardless — and that hunted an anonymous pamphlet for a century without finding its author. It kept one set of accounts closed, without a serious breach, for the better part of two hundred years: accounts belonging to a body chartered by the States-General, in which a large part of the Dutch propertied class held shares, and whose operations included the clearing of Banda and the compulsory delivery systems of Ambon, Ceylon and Java.

That is not an accident of what happened to interest people. It is a statement of what the order actually cared about protecting.

To which add the physical seam, which required no policy at all. A despatch took the better part of a year. A question and its answer took two sailing seasons. Nobody in Amsterdam ever read a report about Java that was less than eight months old, and everybody involved knew it and complained about it constantly. The gap between what was resolved in the Republic and what was done in the archipelago was, for the first two centuries, produced by the Cape and the monsoon before it was produced by anybody's intention.

But the deeper failure was not concealment

And here the previous module has to be carried forward, because it changes what this one can claim.

The Company's books were closed. But even if they had been thrown open on any morning of the eighteenth century, a reader would have found in them the quantities of coffee received at Cirebon, the prices paid, the freight, the establishment, and the margin realised at Amsterdam — and nothing whatever about what the coffee had cost the people who grew it. Not because anybody had removed it. Because it was never entered, and it was never entered because it was never measured, and it was never measured because the entire economy of the Priangan arrangement was that it required no survey, no assessment and no enumeration.

The same is true of the Cultivation System, with a further layer of officials whose pay depended on the delivered tonnage and on nothing else.

So there are two quite different information failures running through this case and they need to be kept apart, because the remedy for one is useless against the other. Concealment presupposes that somebody knows and is withholding: open the books

and the knowledge is there. Non-generation presupposes nothing and yields nothing: open the books and the entry is absent, because the transaction was recorded at the point where the Company's hand touched it and not one step further back.

A Governor-General of perfect sincerity, with every paper on his desk and every subordinate telling the truth, would still not have been able to say what the arrangement cost Java. That is not an excuse for anybody. It is a harder charge, and it is the one Multatuli would eventually make: not that the facts were hidden, but that nobody had thought it worth the trouble to look.

What did travel

One variable came through the pipe promptly, accurately and in public: the price.

The coffee arrived. The Netherlands Trading Society's auctions were held and reported. The dividend was declared. After 1830 the *batig slot* appeared as a line in the national budget, and by the 1850s that line was more than half of everything the Dutch state received. A Dutchman who wanted to know how the Indies were doing had excellent, timely and truthful information about exactly one thing.

Which is why Droogstoppel is not a portrait of an ignorant man. He is a portrait of a man who knows one number extremely well and has been given no reason to suspect that it is a summary of anything. His complacency is the correct response to his evidence. The satire lands because the reader recognises that he himself has the same evidence.

The seam opened, and not from the colonial end

Now the finding, and it is a matter of dates.

Nothing that happened in Java opened the seam. No governor confessed, no resident's report broke through, no scandal in the colony forced the question. What happened was that in 1848 the Netherlands revised its constitution.

Thorbecke's revision brought ministers under parliamentary responsibility and, decisively for this study, brought the finances of the Indies within reach of the States-General, so that the colonial accounts had to be laid before the Chamber and could be asked about. For the first time since the Company's charter lapsed, there existed a body in the Netherlands with both the standing and the appetite to interrogate what the colony was doing.

Into that Chamber, in 1849, came a man who had spent eleven years in Batavia. Wolter Robert, Baron van Hoëvell, had gone out as a Protestant minister in 1836, led a Malay- and Dutch-speaking congregation, revived the Batavian Society for Arts and

Sciences, and in 1838 founded the *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, a journal which — the standard account is precise about this — managed to criticise the colonial government despite heavy censorship. In May 1848, with news of the European revolutions arriving, he took a leading part in a meeting at which a multi-ethnic group of Batavia's inhabitants put their grievances to the government. He was censured for it and left the Indies. He sat as a Liberal member from 1849 to 1862, was nicknamed the chief of the colonial opposition, and resumed editing his journal from the Netherlands.

He was in the Chamber for the famines. The interpellation on the hunger in Java was raised in the parliamentary session of 1849–50, and the debates of the following year returned to it.

Set the sequence out and the mechanism is unmistakable. The information about Java had not improved. The men in Java had not changed their behaviour. What had changed was that a legislature at home had acquired the right to ask, and that a man who had been there was sitting in it. **A colonial seam of this kind does not fail because the truth gets out. It fails because the constitutional arrangements at the metropolitan end are altered by people arguing about something else entirely.**

And the order defended itself at the end it still held

The response is the part that should be dated carefully, because the timing is the argument.

On 10 November 1856 the Governor-General promulgated the *Drukpersreglement*, the press regulation of the Netherlands Indies — a scheme of preventive censorship requiring printed matter to be submitted before publication. It was, in the judgement of the specialist literature, plainly aimed at stifling criticism of the colonial government. Thorbecke called it a child of darkness. It produced immediate and serious protest in the Indies, including a riot among journalists. It was attacked in the Dutch parliament in 1857, and the members could do little beyond expressing dismay. It remained in force until the end of Dutch rule in Indonesia.

Eight years after the metropole acquired the power to ask, the colony acquired preventive censorship.

That is not a coincidence and it is not, in the ordinary sense, a conspiracy either. It is what a government does when one end of a two-ended seam stops being defensible. The colonial administration could not censor the Netherlands; the Netherlands had a constitution, a parliament, a free press and an opposition. It could censor Batavia, because in Batavia it was sovereign and there was no one to stop it. So it tightened where it could still tighten, which had the effect of closing off the one channel — the

Indies press, van Hoëvell's own former channel — through which a Dutch official on the spot might have got something into print without going home first.

When distance stops doing the work, the order re-establishes the seam by law at the end where it remains sovereign. That is a general instrument and it has a date in this case.

Lebak, 1856

In the same year, at the other end of the same island, a middle-ranking official was discovering how the machine handled a man who used the proper channels.

Eduard Douwes Dekker had been in the Indies civil service since 1838 and had risen steadily despite a long record of quarrels with superiors. In January 1856 he was appointed assistant-resident of Lebak, in Banten — a poor, remote and notoriously badly governed district. Within weeks he had formed the view that the regent of Lebak and his family were extorting labour, buffaloes and produce from the population beyond anything the arrangements allowed, and he made a formal accusation against him.

His resident did not support him. The Council of the Indies wanted him dismissed for impudence and impetuosity. The Governor-General, Duymaer van Twist, chose instead to remove him from Lebak and transfer him elsewhere, and — this is the part the hagiography leaves out and it should not be left out — the surviving letters suggest Dekker was considering accepting the transfer, until a second and harsher letter arrived reproaching him for undue haste and want of caution. That letter appears to have provoked the resignation, and even then he does not seem to have regarded it as final. Van Twist, about to sail for home, accepted it, and every subsequent attempt Dekker made to reopen the matter was turned away.

So the man became the case. He was not silenced, exactly. He was processed: accusation received, procedure followed, officer reassigned, resignation accepted, file closed. Nothing improper occurred at any step, and the information reached the top and stopped there, which is what a well-functioning bureaucracy does with a report it does not wish to act on.

Note also, because the module on compliance turns on it, exactly whom Dekker had accused. Not a Dutchman. A Javanese regent — the very figure whose heritable position and untouched traditional dues were the price the Company had paid for the whole arrangement, and whose legitimacy in the eyes of his own people was the thing that made the demands enforceable. To act on Dekker's charge would have been to attack the load-bearing member of the structure. His superiors understood that perfectly, and he did not.

The book, and what its publisher did to it

He wrote it in a boarding house in Brussels in 1859, in something under a month, under a Latin pseudonym meaning *I have borne much*. Through a Masonic connection the manuscript reached Jacob van Lennep — a well-known author, a man of influence, and a man who recognised at once what he had.

Van Lennep acquired the copyright. And then he went through the text and struck out the dates, and the names of the people, and the names of the places.

A copy of that first edition, with the deletions, is in the British Library. Multatuli took van Lennep to court, lost, appealed, and lost again. It was not until 1875 that he was able to buy back the rights to his own book and restore what had been cut. The stated motive for the cuts was fear: that the book as written would provoke a rising in the Indies.

Consider precisely what was removed. Not the argument. Not the anger. Not a single one of the passages that make the book famous. What was removed was the apparatus by which a reader could have gone and checked: this regent, in this district, in this year. Strip those and a set of documented accusations becomes a novel — vivid, moving, unanswerable and unfalsifiable, and therefore dismissible by anyone who wished to dismiss it, on the entirely respectable ground that it was fiction.

The most efficient suppression is not to prevent publication. It is to remove the particulars that would have made the claim checkable, and then let the work succeed.

And the extraordinary thing is that Multatuli had already answered the manoeuvre inside the book, before it was performed on him. In the chapter following the story of Saïdjah and Adinda he anticipates the objection directly, taking *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as his parallel:

> *"...zal men tot haar zeggen: 'ge hebt gelogen, de slaven worden niet mishandeld, want ... er is onwaarheid in uw boek: het is een roman!'"*

will one say to her: you have lied, the slaves are not ill-treated, for ... there is untruth in your book: it is a novel!

And then, in a single sentence that is the whole difficulty of testimony from a place nobody can check:

> *"Is 't haar schuld — of de myne — dat de waarheid, om toegang te vinden, zoo vaak het kleed moet borgen van de leugen?"*

Is it her fault — or mine — that truth, in order to gain admittance, must so often borrow the dress of a lie?

He had put on the dress because it was the only garment that would get him through the door. His publisher then took away his papers.

What the book said about seeing

The passages that matter for this module are the ones about perception rather than about cruelty, and they are the ones least often quoted.

On why nobody could contradict his portrait of a Javanese boy, and what that says about the observers:

> *"Slechts zeer weinig Europeanen immers achten het de moeite waard zich neertebuigen tot waarneming der aandoeningen van de koffi- en suikerwerktuigen die men 'inlanders' noemt."*

For very few Europeans indeed think it worth the trouble to stoop to observing the feelings of the coffee- and sugar-machines that are called "natives."

That is the whole information problem of the colony, written by a man who had been inside the administration for eighteen years. Not a lie told about Java; a category into which Java had been put, in which the question of what its inhabitants felt did not arise, because what they were, in the only relation the metropole had with them, was plant.

On where the burden of proof lies, addressed straight at the men who would answer him:

> *"Neen, Minister van Kolonien, neen, Gouverneurs-generaal in ruste, niet dàt hebt gy te bewyzen! Ge hebt te bewyzen dat de bevolking niet mishandeld wordt ... Of zoudt ge durven beweren buffels te mogen stelen van lieden die niet beminnen, die geen droefgeestige liedjes zingen, die niet sentimenteel zyn?"*

No, Minister of Colonies, no, Governors-General in retirement, that is not what you have to prove! You have to prove that the population is not ill-treated ... Or would you dare to maintain that one may steal buffaloes from people who do not love, who sing no melancholy songs, who are not sentimental?

And the demand itself:

> *'Ja, ik wil gelezen worden! ... Ja, ik zal gelezen worden!"*

Yes, I want to be read! ... Yes, I shall be read!

followed by the list of everyone he intends to be read by — statesmen, men of letters, merchants with an interest in the coffee auctions, ladies' maids who hire the book for a few cents, Governors-General in retirement, ministers in office, the lackeys of those Excellencies, and the members of the national representation, who ought to know what is going on in the great realm overseas that belongs to the realm of the Netherlands. And then, against every objection to his style and his structure and his talent:

> *"Goed, goed, alles goed! Maar ... DE JAVAAN WORDT MISHANDELD!"*

Good, good, all of it good! But ... THE JAVANESE IS ILL-TREATED!

To whom he finally addressed it

The book's last page is the one that matters most for what this study has been arguing, and it is usually read as rhetoric when it is in fact a piece of political analysis.

Multatuli does not close by appealing to the Chamber that had just acquired the power to ask, nor to the electorate, nor to the press. He dedicates the book to the King:

> *"...aan U draag ik myn boek op, Willem den derden, Koning, Groothertog, Prins ... meer dan Prins, Groothertog en Koning ... KEIZER van 't prachtig ryk van INSULINDE dat zich daar slingert om den evenaar, als een gordel van smaragd..."*

to You I dedicate my book, William the Third, King, Grand Duke, Prince ... more than Prince, Grand Duke and King ... EMPEROR of the splendid realm of INSULINDE that winds about the equator there, like a girdle of emerald...

and puts the question:

> *"Aan U durf ik met vertrouwen vragen of 't uw keizerlyke wil is: ... Dat daarginds Uw meer dan dertig millioenen onderdanen worden MISHANDELD EN UITGEZOGEN IN UWEN NAAM?"*

Of You I dare ask with confidence whether it is your imperial will: ... That out there Your more than thirty million subjects are ILL-TREATED AND SUCKED DRY IN YOUR NAME?

An earlier module in this study found that the justification of this order had always been addressed to whoever held the power to revoke: the case for the free sea published at the truce negotiation of 1609, the duty of conserving public religion written into the charter at the renewal of 1622. Two and a half centuries later the most effective attack

on the same order arrives at the same address. Multatuli was not being courtly. He had worked out where the decision sat, and he sent his book there.

What it did

Van Hoëvell told the Chamber in 1860 that the book had made the whole country shiver. Sugar contracts were legalised the same year, and the Liberal ascendancy that would dismantle the system dates from about then. The Agrarian Law of 1870 opened Java to private enterprise and ended the government monopoly on export.

But the honest account has to note two things. The system did not end for another decade after the book appeared, and it did not end because of it: van Hoëvell had been attacking it in parliament for eleven years already, the famines had been debated in 1849–50, and the decisive coalition was assembled by liberals who wanted free enterprise rather more than they wanted justice for Javanese cultivators. *Max Havelaar* arrived into an argument that was already running and made it impossible to ignore. That is a large achievement and it is not the same as causing the outcome.

And the second thing: whatever the book changed, it did not change the measurement. Nobody, after 1860 any more than before it, went and established what the arrangement had cost. The seam that opened was the political one. The empty column stayed empty.

Reading the seam against the framework

Three refinements.

First: a distance-seam is not maintained by policy and does not fail through exposure; it fails when the constitutional arrangements at the metropolitan end are changed by people arguing about something else — and the order's response is to re-impose the seam by law at the end where it is still sovereign.

The dates in this case are unusually clean. For two centuries the seam was the Cape and the monsoon, supplemented by a set of books nobody opened. It was not breached by any revelation from Java. It was breached in 1848, in The Hague, by a constitutional revision made for domestic reasons in a European revolutionary year, which had the incidental effect of putting the colonial accounts in front of a legislature. Within a year the opposition had a leader who had lived in Batavia; within two, the famines were on the floor of the Chamber. And in 1856 the colonial government issued a preventive censorship regulation that would outlast Dutch rule.

The instruction is to date a colony's press and censorship laws against the metropole's accountability reforms, and to expect the first to follow the second by

a few years. The order cannot defend the metropolitan end; it will therefore defend the colonial one, and the tightening is a symptom of the seam having already failed rather than of its strength.

Second: concealment and non-generation are different failures, and an order running on the second is immune to the remedy for the first.

The Company's closed books were concealment: the numbers existed and were withheld, and an audit would have produced them. What the audit would *not* have produced — in 1622 or 1750 or 1860 — is any figure for what the arrangement cost the people at the other end, because that figure had never been made. The Priangan contract required no survey; the Cultivation System counted deliveries and paid its officials on tonnage.

This matters for how the collection reads colonial archives generally. The reflex on finding a gap is to look for the suppression, and where the suppression is found the gap is treated as explained. **Java shows a gap with nothing behind it: the information was not removed from the record but was never entered, and the not-entering was the saving that made the whole arrangement profitable.** Opening the books is the right remedy for a concealment and no remedy at all for an absence. An order that extracts through intermediaries and buys outputs rather than assessing revenues has, by that fact, made itself permanently unauditable in the direction that matters, and no amount of transparency reform at the top will change it.

Third: the most effective suppression strips the particulars rather than blocking the work — because particulars are what make a claim checkable, and a claim that cannot be checked can be admired and dismissed in a single motion.

The state censored the Indies press. What actually blunted the most dangerous document produced in this whole case was done by a sympathetic publisher, in Amsterdam, with a pen, and it consisted of deleting dates, names of persons and names of places. Everything that made the book move was left in. Everything that would have let a reader verify it was taken out. It sold enormously, it shook the country, and for fifteen years it could be answered with the observation that it was a novel — an answer Multatuli had predicted in the text and could not refute once his own evidence had been removed from the page.

The instruction that follows is one this collection has to apply to itself as much as to its subjects. The particulars are the evidence: the date, the name, the district, the exact wording. An argument stripped of them is not a weakened argument but a different kind of object, one that has been moved out of the category of things that can be tested and into the category of things that can be enjoyed. That is why this study quotes the *octrooi* by article, and gives the deed of cession by its date, and names what it

has not verified. The alternative is not a less rigorous version of the same claim. It is a novel.

A note on sources.

The primary quotation in this module is exact and is taken from the Dutch text, with one important qualification about which text.

Max Havelaar is quoted from the Project Gutenberg transcription of Multatuli's own later edition — the text as revised in 1881 and carrying the annotations he added for the edition of 1875. **This is emphatically not the first edition of 1860**, and the difference is the subject of half this module: van Lennep's first edition had the dates and the names of persons and places struck out, and Multatuli restored them only after recovering the copyright in 1875. The passages quoted here — the opening sentence about the coffee broker of Lauriergracht 37; the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* passage and the question about truth borrowing the dress of a lie; the remark about the coffee- and sugar-machines called natives; the shifting of the burden of proof onto the Minister of Colonies and the retired Governors-General; *ik zal gelezen worden*; *de Javaan wordt mishandeld*; and the dedication to William III with the girdle of emerald and the thirty million subjects ill-treated and sucked dry in his name — should be checked against a critical edition before being cited as the wording of 1860, since some of them may differ. All translations from the Dutch are the collaboration's own.

The account of the Company's closed books — Le Maire's remonstrance of 24 January 1609, the shareholder petition of 1622, the rudimentary published information and the hundred and ninety-seven years — is carried over from this collection's study of the Dutch Republic with the sources given there.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The standard accounts of Multatuli's career for the Lebak affair of 1856: the appointment as assistant-resident, the accusation against the regent, the lack of support from his resident, the Council of the Indies' wish to dismiss him, Duymaer van Twist's offer of a transfer, the second and harsher letter reproaching him for undue haste and want of caution, and the surviving correspondence suggesting he had been considering the transfer and may not have meant the resignation as final. The same accounts for van Lennep's acquisition of the copyright, his deletion of dates and names, the censored first edition held by the British Library, the failed lawsuit and appeal, and the recovery of the copyright in 1875. The reference literature on van Hoëvell for his years in Batavia from 1836, the founding of the *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië* in 1838, its criticism of the government despite heavy censorship, his leadership of the Batavia meeting of May 1848 and the censure that followed, his membership of the Chamber from 1849 to 1862 and the epithet

"chief of the colonial opposition," and his statement in parliament in 1860 that the book had made the country shiver — **that last is quoted in the secondary literature in an English rendering and the Dutch original has not been seen.** The socio-legal literature on the Indies press for the *Drukpersreglement* promulgated by the Governor-General on 10 November 1856 (Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië 1856 No. 74), Thorbecke's description of it, the protests and journalists' riot it provoked, the parliamentary criticism of 1857, and its survival until the end of Dutch rule. Peter Boomgaard and the parliamentary record for the famine interpellation in the session of 1849–50.

Contested and unverified points. **The constitutional mechanism by which the 1848 revision brought the Indies finances under parliamentary control is stated here in general terms and has not been traced to the articles of the revised Grondwet or to the Regeringsreglement of 1854**, which is the obvious next step and matters because the finding about the timing of the *Drukpersreglement* rests on it. The claim that van Lennep's motive was fear of a rising in the Indies is as reported in the secondary literature and rests on inference about his state of mind. The number of copies and the price of the first edition — which bear on whether van Lennep also restricted circulation, as is sometimes asserted — **have not been established here and the assertion is not repeated as fact**.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish what the Indies press actually published before 1856, which would be needed to say how much the *Drukpersreglement* closed off in practice rather than in law. And the central chronological argument — that the seam failed at the metropolitan end and the order responded by tightening at the colonial one — rests on two dates eight years apart and on the plain aim of the regulation; **no document has been found in which anyone connects them**, and if one exists it would move this from a strong inference to a demonstration.

MODULE 8

Forty Shares in the Opium Society

Module 8 · Elite Coordination and the Default — an arrangement in which every man with standing defended his own place and thereby defended the whole; the one group that was left out of it; and the discovery that such a coalition breaks not when the weak revolt but when the centre grows strong enough to stop paying it.

Sold out in sixteen days

In 1745 the Governor-General at Batavia, Gustaaf Willem baron van Imhoff, set up a company.

It was called the Amfioen Societeit — the Opium Society — and its business was the distribution of opium in Java. Its obligation to the Dutch East India Company was fixed: it was to buy twelve hundred chests a year at four hundred and fifty rijksdaalders the chest, with a lower rate for anything above the minimum. Its shares were priced at four thousand eight hundred guilders apiece, and the total capital was a million and a half.

Every share was taken within sixteen days.

The subscribers, in Batavia, were for the most part senior servants of the Company and the wealthier burghers of the town. Van Imhoff's successor as Governor-General, Jacob Mossel, bought forty shares, and drew a further seven thousand two hundred guilders a year as the Society's director.

Nothing about this was secret and, so far as the record shows, nothing about it was thought scandalous. The head of the Company's government in Asia held forty shares in the body that took the Company's opium monopoly off its hands, and was paid a salary by that body, and this was an arrangement his predecessor had designed and the Company's own establishment had subscribed to in a fortnight.

That is what a default looks like when it is working. Not a conspiracy, not a cabal, not even much in the way of coordination. A structure in which the man with the power to interfere has, in his own name, at a price he paid, an interest in not interfering.

What is actually being asked here

The question in this module is not whether the people at the top of this order liked one another. They frequently did not; Valckenier and van Imhoff detested each other,

and the mutual hatred of a Governor-General and a member of his Council will shortly turn out to matter.

The question is narrower and more mechanical. **Was the arrangement built so that each person with standing and means held a position whose value depended on the arrangement continuing?** Where that is true, nothing has to be organised. Nobody has to be persuaded, nobody has to be watched, and nobody has to believe in anything. Each man defending his own place is, by that fact and without intending it, defending the whole; the structure is held up by the sum of ordinary self-interest, and it will be defended by people who have never met and would not agree about anything else.

And the corollary, which is where the interesting part always lies: **the arrangement is at risk exactly where a group with standing and means stops being paid.** Not where the poor are miserable — the previous module dealt with them, and misery at the bottom is compatible with centuries of stability. Where a stratum that has the capacity to act finds that its position no longer requires the arrangement, or that the arrangement no longer requires it.

Java supplies unusually clear specimens of both.

The Company's servants: a default attached to the office, not to the Company

Begin with the men who actually ran the thing, because their case is the most instructive and the least like what one would expect.

The Company paid derisory salaries. Valentijn, writing in the early eighteenth century, put the Governor-General's at around fourteen thousand guilders a year; other accounts give figures of a few hundred guilders a month for the same post. Against that, the fortunes were enormous. The income of a Governor-General in 1765 has been assessed at three hundred and fifty thousand guilders. It is reported — on a chain this study has not been able to verify and flags accordingly — that one Governor-General returned to Holland in 1762 with something like ten million guilders after a six-year term.

The gap was filled by the position itself. In the Moluccas it was an established custom that a fifth of the money the Company paid to local chiefs for spices went into the pockets of the Company's own officials handling the transaction. In Java the prices for pepper and rice were fixed anew at each transaction, which left the Company's negotiators with a standing opportunity that they took. Above all there was private trade — the *morshandel*, the illicit traffic on the Company's own ships, in the

Company's own commodities, conducted by the Company's own servants, with the ship's officers given a share to keep them content.

The directors knew. They had instructed as early as 1685 that the opium trade was to be maintained with all vigour for the Company and private persons kept out of it, and they named the illicit trade as one of the principal causes of their falling revenue. In 1713 the Council at Batavia chose Christoffel van Swoll as Governor-General, his honesty being the deciding factor in a period notable for the absence of the quality, and he put a great deal of energy into suppressing private trade and was, in the summary of the standard account, not really successful. In 1750 Mossel — the same Mossel, of the forty shares — issued on instructions from Amsterdam a set of regulations restricting displays of ostentatious luxury, setting out in detail what conspicuous splendour a man of each rank might permit himself. The records suggest the regulations were not much obeyed either.

Now read the whole of that together, because it resolves into something precise rather than into a general observation about greed.

The Company's servants in Asia defended their positions with total commitment. They defended the Company not at all. And this was not inconsistency; it was a straightforward response to where their income came from. A senior servant's money came from the discretion attached to his office — the price he set, the permit he granted, the cargo he shipped, the fifth he retained — and that discretion existed because the Company held a monopoly and governed a territory. He therefore had an overwhelming interest in the monopoly and the territory continuing, and an equally strong interest in the Company's own returns from them being as small as the traffic would bear.

Which is why the Amfioen Societeit is the perfect specimen. When the Company cut its servants in formally — a chartered body, publicly subscribed, obliged to take twelve hundred chests a year — those servants defended the monopoly ferociously, because their dividends depended on nobody else selling opium. When the Company did not cut them in, the same men smuggled around it. The loyalty went, without any hypocrisy at all, to whatever paid.

So the Dutch order in Java possessed, at the same moment, an almost unbreakable default protecting the positions in Batavia and no default whatever protecting the enterprise those positions sat on. That is how a body can be simultaneously unassailable in Asia and insolvent in Amsterdam, and it is why the Company's collapse, when it came, came from the balance sheet rather than from any challenge to its rule.

The one group that was outside

Which raises the obvious question. There was a body of people with an immense financial interest in the Company's long-run health, numbering in the thousands and including a large part of the Dutch propertied class. Why did the participants not defend it?

Because they were not in the arrangement. The charter of 1602 gave a subscriber the right to put in as much or as little as he pleased and the right to a distribution when five per cent of the returns was in the cash-box. It gave him no meeting, no vote, no inspection, and no means of removing anybody. The ten-yearly reckoning promised in Article VII was not held. The audit petitioned for in 1622 was refused. The books stayed shut for a hundred and ninety-seven years.

What the participant had instead was a price on the Amsterdam exchange and the ability to act on it in an afternoon.

That is the answer to the question this case was brought in to test, and it is not the answer the question expects. A liquid holding does not make a man a weak defender of the arrangement. **It takes him out of the arrangement's defence altogether.** A man who holds a position defends the position, because the position exists in a particular place, under a particular structure, and is worth nothing if that structure goes. A man who holds a price does not defend anything; when he becomes uneasy he sells, and his unease is thereby converted into a number and transmitted to someone with less information and more optimism.

So the Company had its most engaged defenders among the men who were consuming it, and its largest financial stakeholders in a position where their only available response to bad news was to leave quietly. The two facts are the same fact seen from either end, and between them they describe an institution that could not be reformed from inside and could not be reformed from outside either.

The diagnostic that falls out is not "who has a stake in this?" but "whose stake requires the arrangement to exist *here*, rather than merely to be worth something?" A position is defended. A price is exited.

The Javanese aristocracy: the best-built default in the case

Against that, set the arrangement the Company made with the men whose country it was, which is the most competently designed piece of political engineering in this entire study.

A *bupati* under Mataram held a revocable assignment of other men's labour, granted at a king's pleasure, and lived — whatever his rank and lineage — at the centre's

discretion, because that discretion was precisely what the centre's power consisted of. Under the Company and its successor he held his regency heritably, with his son's succession guaranteed by a foreign power and eventually written into colonial law; he kept every traditional due in rice and service that had been his before; he was paid *cultuurprocenten*, a percentage on the value of everything produced in his district; and he was protected against his own rivals and his own sovereign by an artillery park he did not have to maintain.

Every one of those benefits depended on the Dutch remaining. Not one of them could have been supplied by any Javanese ruler, because a Javanese ruler who guaranteed his nobles' possessions would have ceased to be the kind of ruler he was.

Nothing therefore had to be asked of a regent except that he consult his own interest. The Dutch did not need him to believe in them, did not need to form him, did not need to trust him, and did not need to watch him very closely, because the structure had been arranged so that his self-interest and their revenue pointed the same way. That is what the settlement of 1755 purchased at Semarang, and it is why the Company could hold Java for two hundred years with a garrison that could not have held a European province for a season.

The Chinese: inside the default and outside the protection

Now the case that shows what the default does and does not guarantee.

The Chinese of Batavia and its hinterland were not a marginal population. They owned and operated most of the sugar mills and plantations of the Ommelanden. They held the revenue farms and the tollgates. They paid more tax in Batavia than anyone else, and the Dutch historian Leonard Blussé's judgement — that Batavia was in fact a Chinese town — reflects a demographic and commercial reality rather than a rhetorical flourish. They had a recognised head, the *kapitan*, appointed by the Company. They were, on any structural reading, a full member of the coalition.

Then the price of sugar fell. Cane from the British and French Caribbean flooded the European market through the 1720s and 1730s, and by 1740 sugar was worth about half what it had been in 1720. Mills in the Ommelanden failed. The men who had worked them — largely recent arrivals from Fujian — were thrown out of work in a district where there was nothing else to do, and some of them took to robbery on the roads.

The Company's response was to restrict entry and remove the surplus. It imposed a quota and a residence permit, the *permissiebriefje*; and it began deporting the undocumented, to Ceylon and to the Cape. Its own officials, as the accounts record, found ways to profit from selling their way around the quota. Rumours then

circulated among the Chinese that the deportees were being thrown overboard once out of sight of land.

On 7 October 1740, hundreds of Chinese sugar-mill workers rose outside the walls and killed fifty Dutch soldiers at Meester Cornelis and Tanah Abang. Valckenier, who had told his Council the month before that any rising would be met with deadly force, disarmed the Chinese inside the city, ordered them to surrender everything down to the smallest kitchen knife, and imposed a curfew. On 9 October the houses inside the walls were searched. What followed lasted from the ninth to the twenty-second. The city's other communities — Balinese, Bugis, slaves, the militia — joined in; Dutch guns were turned on Chinese houses; the government offered a bounty for severed heads. The estimates in the literature put the dead at at least ten thousand, with somewhere between six hundred and three thousand of the city's Chinese surviving. Valckenier declared an amnesty on the eleventh and it was ignored for a further eleven days.

Two things followed, and the second is the one this module is about.

The first is that the killing produced a war. Through 1741 attacks on Chinese spread across Java, and Chinese and Javanese forces fought the Company together for two years. Valckenier was recalled, charged, and died in custody at Batavia — the first time, on the standard account, that the highest authorities in Batavia had been made to answer to the Seventeen for what they had done.

The second is that the Chinese came back.

The survivors were confined to a quarter outside the walls, at Glodok. And within a generation the Company had discovered what it might have worked out in advance: that Batavia could not function without them. By 1773 it was permitting them to return. They resumed the mills, the farms, the tollgates and the opium. Eighty years later the men in the *bandar* booths on the roads of the principalities — waiting out the peasants with their loads, taking their percentage, impounding their draught animals — were the descendants of the community that had been massacred by the government that licensed them. And the recorded Chinese reading of 1740 was not that the Company was the enemy but that the men in office at that particular moment had been bad ones.

A default does not require safety and it does not require affection. It requires that the arrangement remain the best available place to hold your position. The Chinese of Java had nowhere else to be a sugar miller or a farmer of revenue. Whatever the Company had done to them, it was still the only body that issued the franchises, and so they took the franchises again, and defended them, and were hated for them by the Javanese in whose villages they had to stand.

The man with standing and no share

The Javanese side supplies the mirror case, and it has already appeared in this study from another angle.

Diponegoro was a prince of Yogyakarta with a real claim, passed over in the succession, whose income was being squeezed by the tollgate regime, whose estate at Tegalrejo the administration ran a road through, and who was not in the settlement. Everything the arrangement had been designed to give a Javanese aristocrat — security, income, precedence, protection from rivals — had been given to other men, and he had been given a grievance.

The rising of 1825 is often filed as a peasant war and it recruited peasants immediately, for the reasons the module on formation set out. But it began as the defection of a member of the ruling stratum who had standing, means and no stake, and that is the shape elite fractures take. The men who bring down arrangements are almost never the men at the bottom of them. They are men near the top who have been left out, and who have the followers, the legitimacy and the money to do something about it.

And then the state stopped paying its own coalition

Which brings the module to the thing that actually ended the Cultivation System, and to a finding that inverts the usual story so completely that it is worth stating in the specialist's own terms.

R. E. Elson, who spent a decade on the effects of the system in the villages, concluded that 1870 was not the moment of abandonment at all: the system was already in crisis by the 1840s, the 1850s saw attempted reform, the 1860s saw forced cultivation gradually reduced, and its end was brought about largely by developments in Java rather than in Holland — because the colonial state, which had begun weak, grew stronger, and **the coalition arrangements of the system broke down** as a result.

Unpack that, because it is the whole mechanism.

When van den Bosch built the system in 1830 the colonial state was feeble. It had just spent five years and a fortune putting down Diponegoro. It had no survey, no register, no revenue service, and no capacity to reach a Javanese village directly. So it bought a coalition, and it paid every member of it out of the proceeds. Regents got *cultuurprocenten* and their heritable positions. European officials got *cultuurprocenten* too, which is to say the colonial civil service was placed on commission. Village heads got the power to allocate. Chinese farmers got the tollgates and the opium. Sugar contractors — private men with mills — got contracts on terms generous enough to

draw capital in. Every one of these shares came out of the same crop, and every one of them was the price of a state that could not do the work itself.

Then the state grew. It acquired officials, information, reach, confidence. And a state that no longer needs an intermediary starts to notice what the intermediary is costing. The *cultuurprocenten* began to look like corruption rather than remuneration; the sugar contracts began to look like a giveaway; the regents' percentages began to look like an obstacle to efficiency. So the centre started taking the shares back.

At the same moment a new stratum appeared with standing, means, and nothing to lose from the system's destruction. The export boom the system had created had generated, in Java itself and in the Netherlands, a body of traders and planters who could see perfectly well that they could grow the same crops more efficiently than a government monopoly and were forbidden to try. They campaigned at both ends.

The most eloquent statement of the case came from a man who had been one of them. Isaäc Fransen van de Putte had been a sugar planter in Java before he became Minister of Colonies, and in 1864, in the words quoted by Fasseur, his judgement was:

> *"It is not the Cultivation System as such but the entire system of administration that is vicious."*

The Suikerwet and the Agrarische Wet both passed in 1870. The first provided for the government's withdrawal from sugar over twelve years from 1878; the second let private enterprise lease land from the government for terms up to seventy-five years. Between them they ended the system and opened Java to private capital, and the men who had been outside got in.

What this does to the humanitarian account

It is necessary to say plainly what this does and does not mean, because the temptation on establishing it is to become cynical, and cynicism is a worse error here than sentimentality.

Van Hoëvell's eleven years of parliamentary attack were sincere and informed. Multatuli's book was written by a man who resigned his career over a Javanese regent's extortions and then lived in poverty. The famine debates of 1849–50 were not staged. None of that was a cover for commercial interest, and none of the men who made those arguments were in the sugar business.

What is also true is that humanitarian argument does not by itself dissolve an arrangement in which everyone with standing is being paid. It supplies the language, and the language matters, because it determines what the change can be called and

therefore who can vote for it without embarrassment. But the votes assembled in 1870 came from a coalition of people who wanted the state out of business, planters who wanted in, and officials who had come to regard the intermediaries' cut as waste — with the humanitarian case supplying the public reason that let all three of them arrive at the same lobby.

Legibility is not pardon, and it is not debunking either. The system ended, and its ending saved lives; a recent estimate holds that mortality in Java in the 1870s would have been a fifth higher had it continued. That it ended for reasons largely unconnected with the suffering does not make the suffering irrelevant or the argument dishonest. It makes the causal chain what it was.

Reading the default against the framework

Three refinements.

First: a liquid holding does not weaken a stakeholder's defence of an arrangement — it removes him from the arrangement's defence altogether, and the diagnostic must therefore ask whether a stake is a position or a price.

The framework has treated the composition of an elite's holdings as a matter of degree: land binds a man tightly to a particular order, office somewhat less so, a tradeable financial claim least of all. Java shows the change is one of kind. The Company's participants held the largest aggregate financial interest in its survival of any group in Europe, and were structurally incapable of acting on it — no vote, no audit, no meeting, and an exchange open every day. Their entire capacity to respond to bad news was to convert it into a sale. They were not weak defenders of the Company. They were not defenders of it at all, and the Company's fate was decided entirely by men whose interests ran the other way.

Ask of every stratum: does its income require this arrangement to exist in this place, or merely to be worth something to somebody? The first produces a defender. The second produces a seller, and a seller is not a member of the coalition however much he owns.

Second: the default attaches to positions rather than to institutions, and where an officeholder's income comes from his discretion rather than from his institution's health, the default will protect the hierarchy while consuming the thing the hierarchy stands on.

This is the finding this case contributes most directly. The Company's servants in Asia were, by any measure, magnificent defenders of the order they administered: they held Java, extended it, put down risings, and would have resisted any challenge to their authority with everything they had. They also, simultaneously and without any sense

of contradiction, ran a private trade that the directors themselves identified as a principal cause of the Company's falling revenue, sold their way around their own government's quotas, took a fifth of what was paid to spice-growers, and subscribed a million and a half guilders to a private opium monopoly headed by the Governor-General.

The two behaviours are the same behaviour. Their money came from the discretion attached to their offices; the offices existed because the Company held a monopoly and a territory; therefore the monopoly and the territory must be defended and the Company's own return from them was somebody else's problem.

The diagnostic is to ask, of each insider, whether his income rises with the institution's health or with his own discretion. Where it is the second, an order will look most stable at precisely the moment it is being hollowed, because the vigour of the defence and the rate of the consumption are produced by the same incentive. That is not a paradox to be resolved. It is the standard condition of a chartered conquest run by underpaid men eight months from home, and it should be the first thing looked for.

Third — and this is the one that matters most for what follows: a well-built default does not usually end in defection by the discontented. It ends in retrenchment by the strong.

Everything in the standard reading of colonial collapse looks for the moment when somebody stops complying. Java's coalition did not break that way. The regents did not turn; the Chinese, having been massacred, came back and resumed their franchises within a generation; the village heads went on allocating; the sugar contractors wanted more contracts, not fewer. Nobody inside the arrangement withdrew.

What happened was that the centre grew strong enough to resent the price of its own coalition. A weak conqueror buys collaborators, because he cannot do the work himself and has nothing to pay with except a share of the proceeds. A strong state looks at the same shares and sees leakage — the *cultuurprocenten* recategorised as corruption, the sugar contracts as a giveaway, the intermediary as an inefficiency. And the moment it can, it takes the shares back, and in doing so dismantles the very thing that had been holding the arrangement up without supervision.

Look for the end of a default at the point where the centre stops needing its own intermediaries — and note that this point arrives *because the arrangement has succeeded*. The state that could afford to stop paying the regents in 1860 had been built out of the money the regents had delivered since 1830. That is not an irony. It is the ordinary life cycle of a bought coalition, and it means that the most dangerous moment for such an arrangement is not its worst year but its best.

A note on sources.

The primary quotation in this module is minimal and reaches this study at second hand, which is stated on the page and repeated here. No archival document has been consulted for it.

Fransen van de Putte's judgement of 1864 — that it is not the Cultivation System as such but the entire system of administration that is vicious — is quoted in the English rendering in which it appears in R. E. Elson's essay, cited there to Cornelis Fasseur. **The Dutch original has not been seen** and it should be checked before further use.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Noelle Nadiah Richardson's recent work on the Amfioen Societeit for its foundation in 1745, the obligation to purchase twelve hundred chests annually at four hundred and fifty rijksdaalders, the share price of four thousand eight hundred guilders, the starting capital of a million and a half, the subscription of all shares within sixteen days, the predominance of senior Company servants and wealthy burghers among the subscribers, Mossel's forty shares and his salary of seven thousand two hundred guilders as director, and the Seventeen's instruction of 1685 that the opium trade be maintained with all vigour for the Company and private persons kept out of it. Femme Gaastra and Els Jacobs for the Company's eighteenth-century trade and personnel; the Leiden dissertation literature on the Company and its servants in the period of its decline for private trade and the position of senior officers. Leonard Blussé for the Chinese of Batavia. The standard accounts of the 1740 massacre for the collapse of sugar prices between 1720 and 1740, the *permissiebriefje* and the deportations to Ceylon and the Cape, Valckenier's declaration in September, the rising of 7 October and the killing of fifty soldiers, the searches of 9 October, the course of the violence to 22 October, the amnesty of the eleventh, the bounty for heads, Valckenier's recall and death in custody, the confinement of survivors to Glodok, and the readmission of Chinese to the city from about 1773. R. E. Elson for the central finding of the second half of this module: that the system was in crisis by the 1840s, that its end came largely from developments in Java rather than in Holland, and that the strengthening of an initially weak colonial state caused the coalition arrangements to break down. Cornelis Fasseur for the politics of the sugar contracts and the *cultuurprocenten*. The reference accounts for the Suikerwet and the Agrarische Wet of 1870 and their terms.

Contested and unverified figures. **The Governor-General's remuneration is given in the sources at incompatible figures and none is adopted here**: Valentijn's roughly fourteen thousand guilders a year for the early eighteenth century, a few hundred guilders a month in other accounts, and an assessed income of three hundred and fifty thousand guilders in 1765 are measuring different things and probably at different

dates. **The report that a Governor-General returned to Holland in 1762 with about ten million guilders after a six-year term rests on a single weak secondary source and is flagged as unverified**; it is used here only as an indication of the order of magnitude alleged by contemporaries and should not be repeated as fact. The related claim that Company officials were eventually taxed on their graft is from the same source and is **not** relied on. The death toll at Batavia in October 1740 is given in the literature as at least ten thousand, with survivors variously estimated between six hundred and three thousand; the figures are as reported and no reconciliation is offered. The estimate that Javanese mortality in the 1870s would have been about a fifth higher had the Cultivation System continued is from a recent quantitative study cited in the reference literature and has **not** been examined here.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish, from the Dutch parliamentary record, the composition of the majorities that carried the Suikerwet and the Agrarische Wet in 1870 — which is the evidence that would convert the argument about the coalition's dissolution from a strong inference into a demonstration, and which is available in the *Handelingen*. And the account of the regents' motives is, as flagged in an earlier module, an inference from the structure of the two orders and from the terms of the instruments; **no Javanese statement of motive has been consulted**, and the court chronicles remain the obvious place to test it.

MODULE 9

A Measure, not a Punishment

Module 9 · Plurality or Foreclosure — what protection existed against the apparatus, who held it and by what birth, where the little that existed came from, and the liberties this order took away.

The doctrine

The Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies could send any person out of the colony, to anywhere he chose, for as long as he chose, without a charge, without evidence, and without a court.

The power is known in the Dutch literature as the *exorbitante rechten* — the exorbitant rights — and it survived, in one form or another, from the Company through to the end of Dutch rule. No proof was required. No period was specified. The judicial system was not involved at any stage.

The interesting part is not the power but the reasoning that kept it clear of the protections that existed on paper. Banishment under this head was classified as a *maatregel* — a measure — and expressly not as a *straf*, a punishment. The distinction did real work. A punishment had to be proportionate to an offence, which meant an offence had to be established, which meant a procedure. A measure had no offence behind it. Its governing consideration was the maintenance of peace and order in the colony, and peace and order are not facts that can be tried.

Nothing was repealed. The protections attaching to punishment stayed exactly where they were, intact and unamended, and simply never engaged, because the state had moved its conduct into a category they did not cover.

Rationed by birth

That is how the power escaped the courts. The way it was distributed is the more revealing fact, and it is written into the colonial constitution of 1854.

The decision to banish was the Governor-General's. But where the person to be removed was a **Dutchman**, the Minister of Colonies and the Dutch parliament both had to be informed, and a stated rationale for the decision was obligatory. Where the person was born in the Netherlands Indies — a *priyayi*, for instance — it was considered sufficient to inform the Minister alone, and **no rationale was required at all**.

Same power. Same official. Same act. Two entirely different levels of protection, distinguished by where the subject happened to have been born, and set out in the instrument that governed the colony for the better part of a century.

So the answer to the question this module exists to ask — was there protection from the apparatus? — is not yes and not no. It is: some, unevenly, and the unevenness was the constitution. A Dutchman removed from Java had, at minimum, the fact of his removal placed before a legislature in Europe and a reason attached to it, which is not nothing: it created a record, and a record can be raised in a chamber by somebody who wants to raise it. A Javanese aristocrat removed from Java generated a line in a despatch to a minister and no reason whatever.

Where an order's liberties are graduated rather than absent, the graduation is the map of its actual constitution. It shows exactly who the order thinks it has to answer for.

The colony as the place where the metropole's liberties stopped

And now the fact that the standard picture obscures, because it does not fit the shape of a story about Europeans and natives: the reduction ran to the Europeans too.

Until 1815 the Governor-General held the absolute right to ban, censor or restrict any publication in the colony. In 1856, as the previous module recorded, the *Drukpersreglement* imposed preventive censorship on the printing presses of the Indies — presses run by Dutchmen, printing in Dutch, for a European readership. The Dutch parliament attacked it in 1857 and could do nothing about it. It outlasted Dutch rule.

There was no representative body in the colony of any kind. All government officials were formal agents of the Governor-General and depended on his office for their budgets. A Dutchman living in Batavia in 1860 had a free press at home and a censored one where he lived, a parliament at home and none where he lived, and — if the Governor-General judged him dangerous to peace and order — could be put on a ship without a charge, subject only to the requirement that The Hague be told why.

This is not an irony and it is not incidental. It follows directly from what the order actually consisted of. Every module of this study has found the same instrument at the centre: official discretion. The price paid for coffee, the permit granted to a Chinese householder, the regent confirmed or not confirmed, the contract awarded to a sugar mill, the quota set for a residency. An order that runs on discretion cannot hand out enforceable rights against discretion to one class of resident and withhold them from another *in the same jurisdiction*, because rights are administered by courts and a court

that can hear one man's complaint about an official's decision has acquired jurisdiction over the decision.

So the colony became a zone of reduced liberty for everybody standing in it, with the reduction graduated by birth. **The metropole's liberties stopped at the tideline, and they stopped for the metropole's own people first, because they were the only ones who had ever had any.**

Petition and assembly, tested once

There is a clean experiment on whether the subjects of this order could assemble and petition, and it was run in 1848.

News of the February revolution in Paris reached Batavia in the ordinary way, months late, and produced what has been called, half-seriously, the Batavian revolution of 1848. A multi-ethnic group of the city's inhabitants — Europeans, Eurasians, and others — assembled and presented their grievances to the government. Among the leaders was Wolter Robert van Hoëvell, eleven years a minister of religion in Batavia, founder of the *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, and by then the most informed critic of colonial policy in the colony.

The petition was made. Nothing came of it. Van Hoëvell received an official reprimand for publicising views critical of colonialism, and was forced to resign.

That is the whole of the answer. Assembly and petition were physically possible, were attempted once by respectable men in the capital, achieved nothing, and cost the principal petitioner his position and his career in the Indies.

The sequel is the part worth holding, because it locates the liberty precisely. Van Hoëvell went home, entered the Dutch parliament in 1849, and spent thirteen years as the most effective enemy the colonial system had — raising the famines, attacking the Cultivation System, forcing sugar contracts onto a legal footing, and telling the Chamber in 1860 that Multatuli's book had made the country shiver.

The liberty existed. It existed in Europe. The way to exercise it was to be expelled to the place where it worked. A man could speak about Java, effectively and with consequences, from The Hague; he could not speak about Java from Batavia. That is what a seam split by distance does to a right: it does not abolish it, it relocates it to where the people affected are not.

Where the protections that did exist came from

The framework's expectation is that protections against an apparatus are not created by the people at the bottom, who lack the standing to bargain, but fall out of quarrels

among people at the top — a faction wanting a guarantee against a rival or against the centre, extracting it at a moment when the apex would rather concede than break the arrangement, and leaving behind a precedent that outlives the quarrel.

Java confirms it, and the clearest case is grim.

In 1740, after the killing at Batavia, Gustaaf Willem baron van Imhoff — a member of the Council of the Indies, and the man who had himself proposed deporting the surplus Chinese to Ceylon — took the view that the massacre had been a catastrophe and said so. Governor-General Valckenier, who loathed him, had van Imhoff and two other councillors arrested for insubordination and shipped to the Netherlands to face charges.

Van Imhoff arrived, argued his case, and won. The Seventeen took his side, and appointed him Governor-General. They then sent orders to the Cape, where Valckenier had stopped on his own way home, to arrest the former Governor-General and return him to Batavia. He was imprisoned in the same fortress in which he had held the Kapitan Cina, Nie Hoe Kong, and he died there in custody.

On the standard account, this was the first occasion on which the highest authorities in Batavia were made to answer to Amsterdam for what they had done.

Note the mechanism with some care, because it is unlovely and it is the mechanism. No court in the colony tried anyone. No Chinese complaint was heard. No charter, no statute and no right was invoked or created. What produced the first accountability of a Governor-General in the history of Dutch Asia was that two men on the same Council hated each other, one of them was arrested by the other, and the one who was arrested had better friends at home. The dead of October 1740 obtained a dead Governor-General as a by-product of a quarrel to which they were not party and which they could not have influenced.

And the residue went the wrong way

Which brings this module to the finding that Java contributes, and that the framework's expectation does not contain.

The precedent of 1740 was real. It did not accrete into anything protective for the people whose deaths had occasioned it. What accreted for them was restriction, and it accreted steadily for the next ninety years.

From 1740 the Chinese of Batavia were assigned to their own residential quarter — the *Chinese kamp*, at Glodok, outside the walls — and forbidden to live elsewhere. In 1816 came the *passenstelsel*: a Chinese person leaving his assigned area had to carry a pass. In 1826 the *wijkenstelsel* formalised the whole arrangement into a zoning system

in which every ethnic group was allotted its own quarter. From about 1830 both were rigorously enforced.

So the same community, out of the same episode, obtained a precedent that a Governor-General could be called to account, and a ghetto, and a pass required to leave it.

The residue of a factional fight is not necessarily liberty. Its direction depends on whether the winning faction has any stake in the standing of the group whose grievance was the occasion. Van Imhoff needed to defeat Valckenier. He did not need the Chinese of Batavia to hold any particular position, and once he was Governor-General his interest in them was exactly the interest the Company had always had: that they should mill sugar, farm the revenue, and be countable. The restrictions served that interest. Nothing in the quarrel required them to be protected, so nothing protected them.

The instruction that follows is a second question to put alongside the first. Not only: was there a factional fight? But: **did anybody who won it need the affected group to keep its standing?** Where the answer is no, the fight can produce a genuine constitutional precedent at the top and a net loss of liberty at the bottom, from the same event, in the same decade.

The protections that were won, and by whom

Two groups did get real, durable protection against the apparatus in this order, and both fit the framework's expectation exactly.

The first is the Javanese aristocracy. A regent's hereditary tenure — guaranteed by the Company from the treaties onward, and eventually written into colonial law in the reforms of the 1850s — is a genuine protection against discretion, and it is worth naming as such rather than only as a bribe. Under Mataram a lord held at the centre's pleasure, and the pleasure could be withdrawn tomorrow. Under the Dutch he held on stated conditions, in writing, with his son's succession secured. He had acquired something a Javanese ruler could not have given him: a position the sovereign could not simply take back.

And he acquired it in the classic way. He had standing; the apex needed something he alone could supply, namely a counterparty who would still be there next season with the coffee; and the concession cost the apex nothing, because the Dutch had no interest in Javanese lords being insecure. A group with leverage bargained and got a right. Nobody below the regents got any part of it.

The second is smaller and later and shows the same mechanism among Europeans. Through the 1850s the sugar contracts — the arrangements under which private mills

processed the government's cane — were awarded at ministerial and gubernatorial discretion, which is to say by favour. The contractors, who had capital sunk in mills and no security, wanted them on a legal footing. Van Hoëvell, in parliament, pressed the case and had the granting of sugar contracts legalised in 1860, arguing among other things that legal contracts rather than arbitrary favouritism would yield the Netherlands more money.

There is the framework's mechanism in miniature: a faction with standing and means, damaged by the apex's discretion, converting favour into enforceable right, at a moment when the apex preferred conceding to losing the capital. It was a real liberty, it held, and it went to men with sugar mills.

What was taken away

This case has a column the framework's usual accounting does not, and it should be filled in carefully, because the temptation is to write a story in which a free Java was subjugated, and that story is false.

Java's maritime world. In the sixteenth century the *pasisir* was a commercial civilisation: Gresik, Tuban, Demak, Jepara, Surabaya, Banten, trading with China, Gujarat, Malacca and the eastern islands, with Javanese, Malay, Chinese and Indian merchants moving freely between them. The Company's monopolies, its system of passes for Asian shipping, and its acquisition — in the cession of 1743 — of the harbours, the customs offices and a two-kilometre band around the whole coast, converted that world into a set of Company ports on a Company shore. The scholarly argument about how far Southeast Asia's commercial age was ended by European monopoly rather than by wider causes is genuinely unsettled and this study does not attempt to settle it. What is not in dispute is that the freedom of a Javanese to load a ship and sail it where he liked existed in 1600 and did not exist in 1800.

The freedom of the Chinese to live and move where they chose, which existed until 1740 and was withdrawn in stages to 1830.

The right of a Javanese prince to deal with anyone he wished, closed off treaty by treaty until Pakubuwana III's bond of 1749 required him to undertake nothing without the prior knowledge of the Company's resident.

And the largest one, which the module on compliance established and which belongs here under its proper name. The Javanese cultivator never held a right against anybody. Under Mataram he had no protection from the man holding the assignment over his household, and his obligations were whatever that man said they were. But he had, until the nineteenth century, a real constraint on his rulers, and it was that he could walk — to another lord's district, to a *perdikan* village, to the coast — and that

the lord he walked to wanted him, because standing in that order was counted in households and households could leave.

That constraint disappeared. Not by a wall, and not by a law: by every reachable district coming to be run by the same government under the same quota. **Exit was the liberty the Javanese peasant actually had, and it was the one this order abolished** — not by forbidding it but by buying the alternatives, so that a man remained perfectly free to leave and had nowhere to leave to.

And one that was granted

On 1 January 1860, Article 115 of the colonial constitution declared slavery abolished throughout the Netherlands Indies, and Article 118 prohibited debt-bondage in Java with a direction to the Governor-General to extend the prohibition elsewhere where he could. Registered owners in Java were compensated. In the outer islands the practice continued for decades, and the archipelago did not see the institution finally closed out until the twentieth century.

This was a real liberty, granted to people who had none, and it should be counted. It should also be counted accurately. Batavia had been a slave city — in the eighteenth century well over half its population was enslaved, bought from Bali, Sulawesi, the Malabar coast and elsewhere, and the Company's own establishment had been among the largest holders. Abolition came a generation after the British, was legislated in Europe under external and domestic pressure rather than demanded in the colony, and was paid for by compensating the owners.

And it arrived in the same decade, under the same constitution, as the *Drukpersreglement* and the formalised power of banishment without trial. The instrument that freed the slaves of Batavia is the instrument that made it sufficient, when exiling a man born in the Indies, to inform a minister and give no reason.

That is not hypocrisy and calling it hypocrisy explains nothing. It is what a legal order looks like when its liberties are granted by a distant legislature responding to metropolitan argument, and its coercions are designed by a colonial government responding to the requirements of rule. The two processes ran at the same time in the same document and were not in conversation.

Reading liberty against the framework

Three refinements.

First: the efficient way to void a protection is not to repeal it but to move the conduct into a category the protection does not cover — and the diagnostic is to look for a protection that stands intact and never bites.

Banishment in the Netherlands Indies was not an exception to the rule that punishment requires proportionality and proof. It was placed outside that rule by being called a measure rather than a punishment, on the ground that its object was the maintenance of peace and order rather than the answering of an offence. Nothing was suspended. The guarantees remained on the books in perfect condition and simply had no application, because the state had stopped doing the thing they governed and started doing a differently named thing instead.

This is the same instrument the collection has already found on the fiscal side, where a ruler under pressure leaves the published rate alone and changes the base, or the unit the obligation is denominated in. **The general form is that categories are cheaper to move than rules are to change, and that a category is a technical matter settled by the ruler's own officials while a rule is a public one.** The research instruction is to stop asking whether a protection exists and start asking what class of act it attaches to, and then to look at what class the state has put its own conduct in.

Second: the residue of a factional fight is not necessarily liberty. Its direction depends on whether anyone who won the fight needed the affected group to keep its standing.

The framework's expectation — that rights accrete from quarrels among the powerful rather than from demands by the powerless — holds in this case and produced, in 1740, the first real accountability of a colonial governor to his principals in Europe. But the group whose massacre occasioned that quarrel did not gain a single protection from it. They were confined to a quarter, and then required to carry a pass to leave it, and then formally zoned, over the ninety years that followed.

The reason is structural rather than moral. Van Imhoff needed to beat Valckenier; he did not need the Chinese of Batavia to hold any particular position, and as Governor-General his interest in them was that they should mill sugar and farm revenue and be countable — an interest the restrictions served.

So the question to ask of any factional fight is not whether it happened but whether it left anyone in the winning coalition dependent on the affected group's standing. Where it did — as with the regents, whose heritability the Company needed because it needed a counterparty — the residue is a durable right. Where it did not, the same fight can yield a genuine constitutional precedent at the top and a net loss of liberty at the bottom, from one event, and the two will appear in different literatures and never be read together.

Third: in an order that runs on official discretion, the rulers' own nationals lose liberties too, and the gradient of the loss is the order's real constitution.

The colonial reduction of liberty is normally read as something done to the colonised. In Java it was done to everyone standing on the ground, and the Dutch in Batavia lost more in absolute terms than the Javanese did, for the simple reason that they had more to lose: a free press at home and a censored one where they lived, a parliament at home and none where they lived, and liability to removal without charge subject only to a note to The Hague.

The cause is not malice toward Dutch settlers. It is that discretion is the working instrument of this kind of rule, and enforceable rights against discretion cannot be granted to some residents of a jurisdiction and withheld from others, because a court that can hear one complaint has acquired jurisdiction over the decision. So the whole colony becomes a zone of reduced protection, and the differentiation has to be done not by granting rights to some and not others but by **graduating the procedure** — parliament informed and reasons given for a man born in Europe, a note to a minister and no reasons for a man born in the Indies.

Read that graduation as the constitution. It states, more exactly than any charter or proclamation in this entire case, who the order believed it owed an explanation to.

A note on sources.

There is no exact primary quotation in this module. Its central material — the text of the Regeringsreglement of 1854 — has **not been consulted in the original**, and the module's most load-bearing claims rest on a modern scholarly description of it. That is a weaker footing than the earlier modules on the settlement and the charter, and it is stated plainly because the article numbers and their wording are exactly the kind of thing this study normally insists on quoting.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The Leiden dissertation literature on criminal law and legal pluralities in the Netherlands Indies for the operation of the political measure of banishment under the colonial constitution of 1854: that the decision lay with the Governor-General; that in the case of a Dutchman the Minister of Colonies and the Dutch parliament had to be informed and a rationale was obligatory, while in the case of a person born in the Indies informing the Minister was sufficient and no rationale was required; that the period could be undefined and no proof was needed; that the legal system was not involved; and that the act was classified as a measure rather than a punishment, on the ground that punishments required proportionality to an offence while a measure was governed by the maintenance of peace and order. The reference accounts of the Governor-General's office for the

exorbitant rights generally and for the absolute right to ban, censor or restrict any publication in the colony until 1815. The socio-legal literature on the Indies press, as cited previously, for the *Drukpersreglement* of 1856.

The reference literature on van Hoëvell for the Batavia protest of 1848, the multi-ethnic presentation of grievances, the official reprimand for publicising views critical of colonialism, and his forced resignation; and Britannica's account of his parliamentary career for the legalisation of the granting of sugar contracts in 1860 and his argument that legal contracts rather than arbitrary favouritism would yield the Netherlands more profit. The standard accounts of the 1740 aftermath for van Imhoff's arrest with two fellow councillors for insubordination, his success before the Seventeen, his appointment as Governor-General, the order sent to the Cape for Valckenier's arrest, his return to Batavia, his imprisonment in the fortress where the Kapitan Cina had been held, and his death in custody. The literature on the Chinese in Java — including the Kyoto working paper on Chinese capitalism in Dutch Java, citing de Haan and Rush — for the assignment of the Chinese to their own quarters after 1740, the *passenstelsel* of 1816, the *wijkenstelsel* of 1826, and the rigorous enforcement of both from about 1830. The recent legal-historical literature on labour in colonial Indonesia for Article 115 of the Regeringsreglement declaring slavery abolished as of 1 January 1860, Article 118 prohibiting debt-bondage in Java, the compensation of registered owners, and the persistence of the institution in the outer islands.

Contested and unresolved points. **The extent to which European monopoly rather than wider causes ended the commercial age of the Javanese coast is genuinely disputed** — the debate running from van Leur through Meilink-Roelofsz to Reid is not settled and this study takes no position in it; the claim made here is confined to the disappearance of a Javanese freedom to trade where he chose, which the pass system and the cession of the harbours and customs establish independently of the wider argument. The proportion of Batavia's eighteenth-century population that was enslaved is given in the reference literature at figures above half and is not more precisely established here. **The date at which the hereditary succession of regents was formally recognised in Dutch colonial law is given as the constitutional reforms of the 1850s and has not been traced to the article**; it was flagged in the same terms in an earlier module and remains outstanding.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish how often the power of banishment was actually used in the period this study covers, as against the well-documented use against Indonesian nationalists in the twentieth century; **the frequency matters for how much weight the doctrine should carry** and the figures have not been sought here. And the argument that the graduation of procedure by

birth was a deliberate design rather than an accretion is not demonstrated: the wording is clear enough, but no drafting record has been examined, and the *Handelingen* of 1854 would be the place to establish whether anybody in the Dutch parliament noticed what was being written.

MODULE 10

Repay the Advances

Module 10 · Change and Collapse — five changes of apex in twenty-one years, none of them made in Java; two great risings, both of which ended with more being taken; and the reform, meant to protect the cultivator, that defunded the only men who could fight.

The decree

On 6 May 1823 the Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies, Godert van der Capellen, issued a decree cancelling the leases under which the Javanese aristocracy of the principalities had rented out their lands to European and Chinese entrepreneurs.

His reasons were good ones and they were humane. A report of 1821 had described cultivators suffering under the misuse of these leases; a leaseholder acquired not only the use of the ground but effective command of the people working it, and the abuses were real and documented. Van der Capellen had spent his term trying to hold together two things that would not go together — a colonial budget sliding into deficit as the post-war export boom faded, and a conviction that ordinary Javanese should be protected from exploitation. The decree was the ethical half of that effort.

It also required the Javanese lessors to repay the advances they had already received.

The advances had been spent. A prince or a *bupati* who had taken several years' rent in a lump and used it — on a household, on a marriage, on the obligations of his rank — was now required to find the money again. The court of Yogyakarta faced ruin. What the aristocracy did, having no other source, was squeeze the cultivators harder and borrow from Chinese moneylenders, so that the class the decree existed to protect was the class that paid for it.

Two years later, in July 1825, a prince of Yogyakarta who had been passed over for the succession and whose estate had just been staked out for a road withdrew to Selarong and declared himself the Just King. The war he began lasted five years, killed something on the order of two hundred thousand Javanese, bankrupted the colonial treasury, and produced — within months of its end — the most extractive arrangement in the history of Dutch Java.

Everything this module has to say is in that sequence, and none of it is what one would expect.

What is being asked

The question is where structural change in this order came from: who was actually able to alter the arrangement, as against who suffered under it or wanted it altered.

It is worth stating the expectation plainly before testing it, because the expectation is unfashionable. An order of this kind is a settlement among people who command organised force, and it is alterable by people who command organised force. A cultivator does not, however many of him there are and however desperate he is. Against an intact apparatus with artillery, a supply line and a professional officer corps, a rising of the unarmed is not a contest; it is a casualty list. So structural change, if it comes, comes from the top: a faction of the hierarchy fractures and arms people against the rest; the apex exhausts itself in a war with an equal and can no longer project force; a rival hierarchy conquers it; or it produces more claimants than it can seat and the surplus turns on it.

The pressure from below is real and it is a genuine cause — it sets the price at which the men at the top do their arithmetic. But it is not the agent, and the difference between being a cause and being the agent is the whole of this module.

Java tests all of that unusually cleanly, because in two hundred and fifty years the arrangement changed several times and the record of why is not in dispute.

The risings, and what they cost the men who rose

The Chinese war, 1740–43. The killing at Batavia in October 1740 produced, in the following year, a general rising: attacks on Chinese across Java, then Chinese and Javanese forces in the field together against the Company for two years. It was the most serious challenge the Company had faced in Java since the sieges of 1629.

It was defeated, and its consequence was the largest single transfer of territory in the entire Company period. Pakubuwana II had joined the rising and then been restored to his throne by the Company; the price of the restoration was the contract of 11–13 November 1743, under which he ceded the whole eastern corner of Java, Surabaya with its regencies, Rembang with its teak, Japara with its revenues, the customs of Semarang, and a two-kilometre band around the entire coastline of the island. The rising did not weaken the Company's position. It produced the instrument by which the Company took the coast.

The Java War, 1825–30. Diponegoro's rising was the largest in the case and came closest to succeeding, drawing in most of central Java and much of its aristocracy. The figures for the cost are given variously and are set out in the note below; the Javanese civilian dead are usually put at around two hundred thousand.

It too was defeated — Diponegoro was taken during a negotiation and exiled to Sulawesi — and its consequences were two, both of them bad for the people who had fought it.

The first is fiscal. The war cost the colonial treasury more than it had, at a moment when the Netherlands was already in serious difficulty: a national debt inherited from the French period running past eight hundred million guilders, annual deficits of twenty to twenty-five million, and the Padri War in Sumatra running simultaneously. Then in 1830 Belgium seceded, removing provinces that had contributed something like half the kingdom's revenue and adding some forty-five million guilders for the campaign to prevent it, and pushing the debt past a billion. A new Governor-General was appointed in the same year with a mandate to make the Indies pay their way, and Johannes van den Bosch introduced the Cultivation System.

The second is political, and it is the one usually missed. The war destroyed what remained of independent Javanese power. The princely states came out of it stripped of most of their surviving territories and authority, and — in the phrasing of the standard accounts — the Dutch achieved political domination throughout Java for the first time in 1830, which was what made a system of government-directed compulsory cultivation administratively possible at all.

So the largest rising in the history of Dutch Java delivered to the Dutch both the motive and the opportunity for the most extractive arrangement they ever built. It supplied the debt that demanded a new revenue, and it removed the last power on the island capable of obstructing one.

This is the hard finding and it should not be softened. A rising that fails against an intact floor is not a neutral event that leaves things as they were. It is a mechanism by which extraction ratchets upward — because suppression has to be paid for and the money is found where money is always found; because a defeated intermediary has less left to bargain with; and because the victory removes the obstacle that had made the harsher arrangement impossible.

The fracture that did work

Set against those, the two occasions on which the arrangement genuinely changed shape from the Javanese side, and note who was involved.

In 1746 Mangkubumi, brother of the reigning Susuhunan, claimed the reward he had been promised — an assignment of three thousand households — and was rebuked in open court by the Governor-General as too ambitious. He left, took up arms, and fought for nine years. He was not a peasant leader and did not pretend to be one; he was a prince with a following, a claim, and the military resources of a great

house. What he obtained, at Giyanti in February 1755, was half the kingdom of Mataram, held as a fief with a guaranteed succession, and a new sultanate that exists to this day.

Diponegoro's rising was the same kind of thing on a larger scale, and its origins are elite origins throughout. The passed-over succession. The cancelled leases and the demand to repay the advances, which alienated a whole stratum of aristocratic landholders who had been adapting to the new arrangements. The tollgate regime squeezing what income remained. The road through the burial ground. Diponegoro drew hundreds of thousands of ordinary Javanese into the war, immediately and easily, for the reasons the module on formation set out — they had been formed on the same material and knew what a Just King was without being told. But the war existed because a member of the ruling stratum with standing, followers and a grievance decided to make it, and it could not have existed otherwise.

Both of the serious challenges to this order in two and a half centuries were made by princes. The men in the villages supplied the weight; they never supplied the decision, and there is no episode in this case in which they did.

The apex was never in Java

And now the fact that dominates everything else in this module, and that the framework's four cracks describe correctly only once one notices where the crack has to occur.

Between 1780 and 1816 the government of Java changed hands five times. Not one of those changes was caused by anything that happened in Java.

The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War of 1780–83 was, in the judgement of the specialist literature, the turning point. The Royal Navy did to Dutch shipping what the Company's own fleets had once done to the Portuguese; the Company's losses were catastrophic; and it never recovered. It was nationalised on 1 March 1796. Its charter was allowed to lapse at the end of 1799, and the Dutch state took over its possessions and its debts.

In 1795 French armies had occupied the Netherlands and the Batavian Republic replaced the old order. In 1806 Napoleon made his brother Louis king of Holland, and in 1808 Louis appointed Herman Willem Daendels Governor-General of Java — so that the man who reorganised the Javanese administration, built the great post road along the north coast with corvée labour, and in 1811 compelled Surakarta and Yogyakarta to cede territory and give up the rent Batavia had paid for the coast since 1746, held his commission from a Bonaparte.

Daendels was replaced by Jan Willem Janssens in May 1811. In August sixty British ships appeared off the coast. Janssens fell back east with troops raised from the Javanese courts and surrendered at Semarang in September. Thomas Stamford Raffles was appointed Lieutenant-Governor. In June 1812 British forces stormed the *kraton* at Yogyakarta, plundered it and exiled its reigning sultan — after which, on Peter Carey's assessment, the relationship between Batavia and the princely states began to resemble Bengal after Plassey.

And in 1816 the British handed Java back, under the terms of a treaty signed at London in 1814 between two European governments settling the affairs of a continent.

Five changes of apex in twenty-one years: bankruptcy, nationalisation, French client rule, British conquest, and restoration by treaty. Every one of them decided in Europe. Not one of them attributable to any act of any Javanese. And throughout the entire sequence the cultivator in the *negara agung* went on delivering to the same village head, under the same district head, under a regent whose position had been confirmed by whoever happened to be in the castle at Batavia that year.

The apex of a colonial order is not in the colony. That is a triviality stated flatly and it has a consequence that is not trivial at all: the subjects of such an order cannot reach their apex, and the reason is not that the floor is too strong. It is that the apex answers to a constituency in another hemisphere, can be replaced entirely by events its subjects never hear of, and is in practice more likely to be destroyed by a rival European navy than by anything occurring on the island it governs.

The exhaustion that made the extraction

The Company's end is the clearest specimen of the second crack, and it is worth being precise about what exhausted it.

It was not defeated in Java. It was never defeated in Java; its floor there held, as the first module of this study showed, on a logistical advantage that Javanese armies could not overcome. Nor was it destroyed by its subjects' resistance, which it suppressed every time at a price it could bear.

It was destroyed by two centuries of carrying a garrison on a trading balance sheet — the arithmetic Coen had written down in 1614 and which worked until the war side of it grew faster than the trade side — and then finished off by a great-power naval war it had no part in choosing, in seas eight thousand miles from Batavia, against an enemy it could not fight. The deficit of seventy-four million found by the States-General in 1789 was the accumulation; the Royal Navy was the blow.

And the state that inherited the wreckage then repeated the pattern in reverse. The Cultivation System was not designed because anybody in Java demanded it or because

anybody in the Netherlands thought Java needed reorganising. It was designed because the Kingdom of the Netherlands was close to insolvency after a French occupation, a Javanese war, a Sumatran war and the loss of Belgium, and required a revenue. **The most consequential change in the internal arrangements of nineteenth-century Java was produced by a European debt crisis, and its immediate trigger was the secession of Belgium.**

And the end of it was not a rising either

The system's dismantling has been examined in the previous module and needs only to be placed in this sequence.

It did not end because the Javanese rose; after 1830 there was no serious armed resistance in Java for over a century. It did not end because the famines of the 1840s produced any Javanese political action; there was none available to be produced. It ended, on the specialist reading, because the coalition that had been assembled to run it came apart — the colonial state having grown strong enough on the proceeds to stop paying the intermediaries who had made it possible, at the same moment as a new body of Dutch traders and planters, generated by the export boom itself, discovered that they were locked out of a business they could run better and began campaigning at both ends.

The humanitarian argument was real, was honestly made, and supplied the public language in which the change could be described. The votes came from men who wanted the state out of the sugar business.

What the ruled did change

The honest objection has to be given its full weight, because the thesis is worthless if it is only asserted.

Nothing above says that Javanese suffering and Javanese anger were causally inert. They were not. They set the price at which every calculation at the top was made, and they did so continuously.

The Java War is the proof. The Dutch never again attempted to govern central Java by direct fiscal pressure on the aristocracy; van der Capellen's method was abandoned and van den Bosch's substituted precisely because the first had produced five years of war and the second was designed to work through the aristocracy rather than against it. The tollgates were eventually reformed. The famines of the 1840s, reaching a Dutch parliament through men who had lived in Batavia, moved the argument in The Hague and made the system indefensible in public even before it was dismantled in fact.

Peasants leaving villages to avoid the plantings, tollgates burned by men who hired bandits to do it, quotas quietly not met — all of that entered the calculation, was reported upward as difficulty and cost, and shifted the arithmetic.

That is a real causal contribution and it should be counted as one. What it is not is authorship. At no point between 1619 and 1870 did any body of Javanese cultivators alter the structure of the arrangement they lived under. They changed what it cost to run, which changed what the men at the top chose to do — and twice, when the pressure became a war, what the men at the top chose to do was take more.

Reading change against the framework

Three refinements.

First: in a colony, three of the four ways an order can crack are located in another hemisphere, and the change module must therefore be researched in the metropole's political history rather than the colony's.

The framework holds that an order changes when its elite fractures, exhausts itself in war, is conquered by a rival elite, or overbreeds. All four remain correct here. The point is where each of them has to happen. The Dutch order in Java fractured in the Netherlands, in 1795 and again in the liberal ascendancy of the 1860s. It exhausted itself in the North Sea in 1781 and in the fields of Brabant in 1830. It was conquered in 1811 by sixty ships from a navy that had never fought a Javanese. Its collapse in 1799 was a bankruptcy declared in Amsterdam.

The subjects of such an order therefore cannot reach it, and the reason has nothing to do with their numbers or their determination. A French peasantry could in principle reach Versailles; an English one could reach Whitehall; the crack, wherever it originates, occurs somewhere they can walk to. A Javanese cultivator could reach a residency office. He could not reach the States-General, the Ministry of Colonies, the Amsterdam exchange or the Royal Navy, and those were the four bodies that between them decided everything about his position. The colonial bend on the theory of change is not that the ruled are more helpless than elsewhere. It is that **the apex has been moved out of range**, and that the most likely agent of its destruction is a rival European power.

Second: a failed rising is not a neutral event. It is a mechanism by which extraction ratchets upward, and the arrangement that follows a defeated rising should be counted rather than the one that provoked it.

Java supplies two clean instances two generations apart. The Chinese and Javanese war of 1741–43 ended in the cession of the coast of Java, because the ruler the Company restored had to pay for his restoration. The Java War of 1825–30 ended in

the Cultivation System, because the war had bankrupted the government that won it and had simultaneously destroyed the only Javanese power capable of obstructing what came next.

The mechanism has three parts and each is general. Suppression costs money and the money is found from the people suppressed. A beaten intermediary has less to bargain with and must accept worse terms. And a victory removes the obstacle that had made the harsher arrangement impossible before, so that the rising clears the ground for the thing it was raised against.

Where a study finds a rising, it should look immediately at the settlement that followed it, and should expect that settlement to be worse for the risers than the one they rose against. That is not a counsel of despair; it is what the evidence in this case says twice, without qualification, and it is the strongest possible form of the claim that the ruled are not the authors of structural change.

Third: a humanitarian reform from above can be the fracture, and the intention behind a reallocation has no bearing on its mechanism.

Van der Capellen's decree of 1823 was made to protect Javanese cultivators from real abuses by leaseholders, by a Governor-General who cared about the question and had been advised the abuses were serious. Its effect was to strip the income of the one stratum in Java that had the standing, the followers and the means to make war, and to require them to repay money they had already spent. They responded by pressing harder on the cultivators the decree was meant to help, and then by fighting.

The framework already holds that fracture occurs where a group with standing and means stops being paid. What Java adds is that **the change which stops them being paid may be a reform, and may be well-intentioned, and this makes no difference whatever** — because the mechanism runs on the reallocation and not on the motive. A study looking for the fracture should therefore examine the reforming decrees as carefully as the extractive ones, and should ask of every measure, whatever its stated purpose: whose income does this move, and does that person have followers?

There is a further and colder observation to be drawn from the same episode. Van der Capellen was trying to do two incompatible things at once — raise the colony's revenue and protect its cultivators — and the attempt to do both is what produced the powder-keg. **A reform that reallocates income downward without reducing the total demand does not relieve anybody; it merely moves the fracture line upward into the class that can fight.** The demand stayed. The intermediaries' income went. The intermediaries took it back from below and then went to war.

A note on sources.

There is no exact primary quotation in this module. It rests on paraphrased modern scholarship and reference accounts, and no archival document has been consulted for it.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Peter Carey above all, for the origins of the Java War and for the destruction of Java's old order between 1808 and 1830: the misuse of land leases reported in 1821; van der Capellen's decree requiring leased land to be returned and advances repaid; the resulting threat of bankruptcy to the Yogyakarta court and the aristocracy's recourse to pressing the cultivators and borrowing from Chinese moneylenders; the judgement that van der Capellen's attempt to reconcile increased fiscal returns with his ethical principles ignited a powder-keg in south-central Java; Daendels's treaties of 1811 with Surakarta and Yogyakarta abolishing the coastal rent paid since 1746; the storming and plundering of the Yogyakarta *kraton* in June 1812 and the exile of its sultan; and the assessment that the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War of 1780–83 was the turning point for the Company. R. E. Elson and Cornelis Fasseur, as in the previous module, for the dissolution of the Cultivation System's coalition. The reference literature for the sequence of 1795–1816 — the French occupation, the Batavian Republic, the nationalisation of the Company in 1796 and the lapse of its charter at the end of 1799, Louis Bonaparte's appointment of Daendels in 1808, the British arrival in August 1811 and Janssens's surrender at Semarang in September, Raffles's lieutenant-governorship, and the restoration of Java to the Netherlands in 1816 under the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1814. The reference and recent quantitative literature for the Dutch fiscal position after the Napoleonic wars: a national debt exceeding eight hundred million guilders, a debt burden of the order of four hundred per cent of net national revenue, annual deficits of twenty to twenty-five million, the Belgian secession of 1830 removing provinces that had supplied about half the kingdom's revenues, the roughly forty-five million guilders spent on the campaign against it, and the appointment of van den Bosch with a mandate to make the Indies pay.

Contested figures, given as ranges and not reconciled. **The date of van der Capellen's decree is given as 6 May 1823 in some accounts and as 1824 in others**, the latter probably referring to the effective date or to a subsequent measure; both are recorded here rather than resolved. **The casualties of the Java War are given in incompatible sets and no figure is adopted.** Javanese civilian deaths are usually put at at least two hundred thousand, from violence, disease and starvation together; the military figures appear both as around fifteen thousand dead on the Dutch side and some twenty thousand among the rebels, and as around eight thousand European and

seven thousand Indonesian soldiers of the Dutch army — these are not measuring the same thing and the difference has not been resolved here. The Dutch national debt figures come from a recent compilation and have not been checked against Dutch fiscal series. The population figures for Java in 1815 and 1825 quoted in some of this literature rest on the same disputed baseline flagged at the opening of this study.

Two things this module does not establish. It does not establish, from the Dutch records, the direct causal link between the Java War's costs and the decision to adopt the Cultivation System — the connection is asserted throughout the literature and is chronologically compelling, but **the Ministry of Colonies papers and van den Bosch's own proposals would be needed to show what weight the war's debts actually carried in the decision**, as against the Belgian secession and the general post-war position. And the claim that the Java War made the Cultivation System administratively possible by destroying the principalities' remaining power is taken from the standard summaries; the treaties imposed on Yogyakarta and Surakarta in 1830 are in the *Corpus Diplomaticum* and should be read directly, as the earlier instruments in this study were.

MODULE 11

For Every Thousand Called Up

Module 11 · The Grim Accounting — two ledgers that do not meet: what the sword took over two hundred and fifty years, and what happened to a population that was lifted, in the same period and by the same arrangement, far above what its island had ever carried.

Two ledgers

An armed company took a river mouth in 1619, held the island around it for two hundred and fifty years through a succession of instruments, and handed over to a set of laws that ended the arrangement in 1870. This module asks what that cost.

The question has to be asked twice, in two different currencies, and the answers point in opposite directions.

The first is the sword: the people killed, enslaved, deported and starved by the direct action of the order — at Banda, at Batavia, in the succession wars, in the Java War, in the ships that carried the enslaved into Company territory.

The second is metabolic. Any settled agrarian order lifts a population above what its ground would carry without coordination; the irrigation, the peace, the transport, the stored surplus and the medicine are what hold it up there. That lift is a real good and it is also a debt, because a population raised on coordination is a population that will fall when the coordination fails. The question is whether such a note was written in Java, whether it came due within this study's period, and what happened when it did.

Neither ledger can be totalled. That is itself the finding, and it is the same finding this study made about the extraction: the receiving end is countable and the paying end was never counted.

The sword

Jayakarta, 1619. A town of a few thousand people burned to the ground and its inhabitants driven out. No figure for the dead exists.

Banda, 1621. The founding operation of the order's power in the archipelago, examined in the first module of this study. A pre-conquest population usually put at thirteen to fifteen thousand; a convergence in the modern accounts on something close to fourteen thousand killed, enslaved or expelled; forty-four of the *orang kaya* beheaded and quartered inside a bamboo enclosure on 8 May by six hired Japanese swordsmen; the islands then re-let to Company grantees who worked them with

imported slaves. The components of the demographic estimate do not reconcile and no total is adopted here.

The Moluccas, through the seventeenth century. Annual expeditions to cut down clove and nutmeg trees outside the districts the Company controlled, so that no spice should grow anywhere it could not be counted, with the destruction of the boats and the livelihoods attached. No aggregate exists.

The Javanese wars. Trunajaya's rebellion and its suppression, 1675–80. The three wars of succession, 1704–08, 1719–23 and 1746–57. The Company was a principal in every one of them, and in most of them the decisive party. **No reliable mortality figures for any of these exist and this study has not found any that could be given even as a range.** They were fought across the most densely settled countryside in Southeast Asia, over years at a time, by armies that lived off the villages they passed through. Whatever the number is, it is large and it is missing.

Batavia, October 1740. At least ten thousand Chinese killed inside the walls in a fortnight, with survivors estimated between six hundred and three thousand; a government bounty offered for severed heads. Then the war of 1741–43 across Java, of which no separate accounting exists.

The Java War, 1825–30. Javanese civilian deaths usually put at around two hundred thousand, from violence, disease and starvation together. The military figures are given in incompatible sets — around fifteen thousand dead on the Dutch side and some twenty thousand among the rebels in one reckoning, around eight thousand European and seven thousand Indonesian soldiers of the colonial army in another — and are not reconciled here.

The slave trade. This is the column most often left out and it is among the largest. Between six hundred and sixty thousand and something over a million enslaved people were transported into territories under the Company's control across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Something like a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand were exported from Bali alone and at least a hundred thousand from Sulawesi, with comparable flows from South Asia, Madagascar and southeast Africa. Batavia's enslaved population stood at nearly twenty-six thousand in the late seventeenth century and around forty thousand by 1780, the enslaved falling as a share of the city from about two-fifths around 1690 to about a quarter by 1780 — falling as a proportion because the city grew, not because the number did.

And the Company itself carried only a small fraction of them: something between about thirty-eight thousand and fifty-four thousand. The rest was private trade, conducted by European, Eurasian and Chinese traders under the Company's licence and within its jurisdiction — which is the pattern this whole study has found, in the

extraction, in the tollgates and in the estates. The order did not do the thing. It created the conditions in which the thing was done, took a cut, and kept its own books clean.

And the conquerors' own dead. Something approaching a million Europeans were shipped to Asia by the Company between 1602 and 1795, and roughly one in three came back. Some of the remainder stayed by choice. Most did not. That is a column of several hundred thousand men — German, Scandinavian, Dutch — who died of fever, dysentery and the voyage, at wages no better than home service, and it belongs in this accounting. They were the instrument and they were also, in the plainest sense, consumed by it.

No aggregate figure for the human cost of this order exists and this study does not supply one. The pieces above are what can be stated. What is missing — the wars of succession, the punitive expeditions, the mortality of the Ommelanden, the deaths in the Company's own workhouses and shipyards — is missing not because it was suppressed but because nobody counted, for the reason established six modules ago: an arrangement built not to measure what it cost does not produce a record of what it cost.

The other ledger

And now the fact that makes Java the hardest case in this collection.

The population of the island multiplied several times over during the period of this study, and most of the multiplication happened in its last seventy years.

The figures are the most disputed in the case and were flagged at the outset. Raffles's census of 1815 returned something like four and a half million. Boomgaard and Gooszen's benchmark reconstruction puts the population at about seven and a half million in 1800 and around thirty million in 1900, holding the official nineteenth-century returns to have understated substantially. Growth rates in the specialist literature run at something over one per cent a year in the first half of the nineteenth century — Boomgaard's own estimate is about 1.25 — accelerating to over 1.5 per cent in the second half. There is a serious revisionist current arguing that the early estimates under-counted the rural population so badly that the apparent explosion is partly an artefact of improving enumeration.

Take even the most conservative reading and the direction is not in doubt. Java carried far more people in 1870 than it had in 1800, and vastly more than in 1619.

What raised the ceiling

The credit column is real and it has to be stated properly rather than conceded grudgingly.

Peace, in a specific and limited sense. From the founding of Mataram to the settlement of 1755, and again through the wars of 1740–43 and 1746–57, the characteristic experience of a central Javanese village was an army passing through and living off it. After 1830 that stopped. For the first time in the recorded history of the island, a cultivator was unlikely to have his rice seized by soldiers or his village burned in a dynastic quarrel. Given that most pre-modern mortality crises are subsistence crises and most subsistence crises are made by armies, this is not a small thing.

Smallpox vaccination. The colonial government ran and expanded a vaccination programme through the nineteenth century, and the specialist literature on Javanese demography — Boomgaard above all — attributes the mortality decline substantially to it. Smallpox in this region hit periodically, every seven or eight years, and was more lethal than plague. Vaccinating against it is one of the very few interventions that shifts a population's death rate immediately and permanently. The divergence between Java's demographic history and that of the outer islands, where vaccination efforts were inchoate, is the evidence for how much it mattered.

Irrigation and transport. The extension of *sawah*, the waterworks, and the road network — much of it built with corvée labour, which belongs in the other column — raised yields and meant that a local harvest failure was no longer automatically a local famine, because rice could be moved.

An order that ends the wars, vaccinates against smallpox and builds roads will raise a population. This one did.

And what the same arrangement cost, in the only place it can be measured

Against that, the one piece of hard quantitative work that connects the arrangement directly to mortality.

De Zwart, Gallardo-Albarrán and Rijpma assembled annual data for sixteen residencies between 1834 and 1879 — the number of workers called up for Cultivation System labour each year, set against births, deaths and population from the Boomgaard and Gooszen series, with the underlying figures cross-checked against the original cultivation reports in the Dutch national archives. They find that forced-labour demands are strongly and positively associated with mortality rates, and they address

the obvious objection that labour demands might follow prosperity rather than cause death by instrumenting the labour demands with international coffee and sugar prices.

The size of the effect, in the year when demands were at their height: **in 1840, for every additional thousand workers called up for cultivation labour, total deaths rose by about thirty.** Their counterfactual is that without the abolition of the system, average overall mortality in Java would have been roughly ten to thirty per cent higher by the late 1870s.

The mechanism they propose is the ordinary one: malnourishment, and the unhygienic and crowded conditions of cultivation work, and the infectious diseases — dysentery, cholera, the fevers — that travel in such conditions. Nobody was shot. The system killed by the route that systems of this kind always kill by, which is to move a large number of underfed people into close quarters at the wrong time of year.

Two things must be said about that number and both are disciplines.

The first is that it is a **rate, not a total**. The authors give a marginal effect and a counterfactual on the mortality rate. They do not give a cumulative figure for excess deaths under the Cultivation System, and this study will not construct one from their coefficients. The temptation to multiply thirty by every thousand called up over forty-five years and produce a headline should be resisted, because that is not what their estimate supports.

The second is that the same analysis contains a finding that cuts against the simple story and should be reported with the rest: **cash payments to the Javanese for the crops were negatively related to the death rate.** Where cultivators were actually paid, fewer of them died. That is exactly what one would expect if the mechanism is malnutrition, and it locates the harm precisely — not in cultivation as such, but in cultivation for a payment set below what it cost to do.

The famines

The clearest instance of a metabolic note being called within the period is the run of famines in the 1840s: Cirebon between about 1844 and 1850, Demak and Grobogan in 1849 and 1850. They entered the Dutch parliamentary debate, they contributed to the argument that ended the system, and they are the episodes everyone cites.

The causation is genuinely disputed and this study takes no side. The detailed revisionist work has established that in Demak and Grobogan the acreage under government tobacco was a small fraction of the cultivated land and the households involved a small minority, so that compulsory planting cannot carry the whole weight; drought, rice prices and the collapse of local entitlements have to carry their share. The Cirebon famine has been similarly revised.

What is not disputed: people starved in numbers, in the middle of the largest export surpluses in the island's history, in a colony whose transfers to Europe in those very years were running at more than half the Dutch state's revenue. And among the recorded responses of the population was that they left their villages.

Mortality figures for these famines are not established in this study and none are given.

The shape of the population that resulted

There is one more thing the metabolic ledger has to record, and it is not a number of deaths but a shape.

By the end of the nineteenth century Java held something close to thirty million people, and towns of more than twenty thousand inhabitants contained less than three per cent of them. Ninety per cent lived in communities of fewer than five thousand. A population the size of a major European nation, with almost no cities.

The classic account of what produced this is Clifford Geertz's: that the Cultivation System, by taking land and labour for export crops while leaving subsistence to the village, locked Java into absorbing every additional person into the same wet-rice fields at ever-higher intensity — more labour on the same ground, yields rising just enough to feed the extra hands, nobody starving and nobody getting richer, a condition he called shared poverty. Intensification instead of transformation. The thesis has been heavily criticised in the specialist literature since, on the grounds that it understates regional variation, overstates the uniformity of village welfare, and treats as a colonial imposition a pattern with deeper roots, and this study does not adopt it.

But the demographic shape it was written to explain is not in dispute, and the shape is what belongs in this ledger. **The coordination raised the ceiling and simultaneously ensured that the population stayed underneath it** — in villages, on the same land, working harder each generation for the same subsistence, with no cities to absorb them and no other sector to move to. That is a population entirely dependent on the continuation of the arrangement that had made it possible, distributed in the way least able to survive the arrangement's failure.

Within the bounds of this study, that note was written and not called. The coordination held; the deaths in the ledger above are sword-deaths and system-deaths, not the collapse of a population above its unassisted carrying capacity. The metabolic debt of Dutch Java was accumulated in this period and fell due later, when the coordination broke — which is outside this study's period and belongs to another accounting.

The forgetting

The last item is not a number.

By 1870 the arrangement had been running for two and a half centuries, and it had stopped looking like an arrangement. It looked like Java.

The regent whose family had held a district for generations and whose son would succeed him was described, by the Dutch and by Javanese alike, as the traditional aristocracy of the island — and his heritable tenure had been manufactured by a foreign trading company that needed a counterparty who would still be there next season, and written into colonial law in the 1850s. The village that answered collectively for its quota, allocated the burden among its households, and periodically redistributed its communal land was described as the immemorial Javanese village community — and the corporate fiscal village had been hardened, and in places the communal tenure produced, by the colonial state that then deferred to it as ancient custom. As one summary of the period puts it, the native administration was progressively raised above the society it governed and made to rest on the colonial government for proof of its legitimacy rather than on the population as it had done before; and this derivation of authority from above rather than from below became a feature of village administration as well.

So: a fleet burns a port in 1619. A dying king signs away a realm in 1749 and his son swears that it comes to him not by birth. A treaty in 1743 takes a band six hundred rods deep around an island. A governor-general is appointed in 1830 to make the place pay for a European debt crisis. And by 1870 all of it has become the Javanese village, the Javanese regent, the way things are and have always been — defended in those terms, sincerely, by people whose great-grandfathers had fought it.

That is what this collection means when it says an order becomes the furniture of reality, and Java shows the mechanism working in a specific and checkable way: not that people forgot there had been a conquest, but that **the conqueror's own instruments were reclassified as the conquered's tradition, by the conqueror, and then defended as tradition by the conquered.**

Reading the accounting against the framework

Three refinements.

First: the sword ledger and the metabolic ledger can point in opposite directions, and an honest accounting must keep them separate and refuse to strike a balance.

Java is the extreme case in this collection. The same order that emptied Banda in 1621, killed ten thousand people in Batavia in a fortnight in 1740, fought a war that killed two hundred thousand Javanese in the 1820s, and drove a measurable rise in the death rate through its cultivation labour is the order under which the population of the island multiplied several times over, largely because it ended the succession wars and vaccinated against smallpox.

Both of those are true. The temptation is to net them — to say that on balance the population grew, or on balance the killing outweighs it — and the temptation should be refused, because netting requires a common unit and there is not one. **You cannot subtract a famine from a vaccination programme.** A person killed at Banda is not compensated by a person alive at Semarang in 1880 who would otherwise have died of smallpox; they are different people, and the second one's existence does not undo the first one's death.

The instruction is to present both columns at full strength and let them stand unreconciled. An accounting that produces a verdict has almost always done so by quietly choosing which column to treat as the real one.

Second: where an order raises carrying capacity, it does not pay a metabolic debt — it writes one, and the note falls due after the order ends, in the hands of whoever is standing there.

The framework's expectation has been that conquest and revolution *call* a metabolic note: the coordination breaks, the population that the coordination had lifted falls, and the debt is paid in famine and epidemic. Java in this period does the opposite. The coordination was extended and deepened, the ceiling rose, and the population rose under it — so that the note was being written continuously for seventy years and was not called once.

What that produces is a liability with a delayed maturity. A population lifted above what its land supports unassisted is a hostage to the assistance continuing, and the distribution of that population — thirty million people in villages of under five thousand, with no urban sector and nowhere else to go — determines how badly it will suffer when the assistance stops. The party that wrote the note is characteristically not the party present when it matures.

The diagnostic is that an order which increases a population without increasing the land's unassisted carrying capacity has transferred a liability forward, and the accounting for that transfer belongs to a later module of a later study. An order's ledger should therefore record not only the deaths it caused but the size of the note it left, and the second may be the larger entry.

Third: forgetting takes a specific and checkable form — the conqueror's instruments are reclassified as the conquered's tradition, and the reclassification is performed by the conqueror.

This collection has held that a built order becomes, over generations, simply the furniture of reality, and that this is what makes it durable and genuine rather than a lie. Java sharpens the mechanism.

What became furniture in Java was not a belief the Dutch had installed — they installed none, having built no schools and offered no story to anyone below a regent. What became furniture was a set of *administrative instruments*, renamed. The hereditary regency was a Company purchase, described as ancient nobility. The corporate fiscal village was a colonial convenience, described as the immemorial village republic. The communal tenure with periodic redistribution was, in places, a colonial artefact of how Dutch officials recorded Javanese arrangements in categories of their own — and it was then treated as the deepest layer of Javanese social organisation, by administrators, by scholars, and eventually by Javanese.

Where a study finds a colonial order describing its own arrangements as native tradition, it should date the arrangement, and should expect a substantial proportion of the tradition to be younger than the order invoking it. This is not debunking and it does not make the tradition false — the village and the regency were entirely real by 1870, and the men who defended them were defending something that had genuinely become their world. It is a warning about the direction of the reasoning. The order does not defer to the tradition because the tradition is old. **The tradition becomes old because the order has been deferring to it**, and the deference is the mechanism by which a conquest disappears into the furniture and stops needing to be justified at all.

A note on sources.

There is no exact primary quotation in this module; it rests entirely on paraphrased modern scholarship and reference accounts, and no archival document has been consulted for it.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. Pim de Zwart, Daniel Gallardo-Albarrán and Auke Rijpma, in the *Journal of Economic History* (2022), for the central quantitative finding: annual panel data for sixteen residencies from 1834 to 1879 drawn from the *Changing Economy in Indonesia* series and cross-checked against the cultivation reports in the Dutch National Archives; the strong positive association between forced-labour demands and mortality; the instrumental-variable strategy using international coffee and sugar prices; the estimate that in 1840 total deaths rose by

about thirty for every additional thousand workers called up; the counterfactual that average overall mortality would have been roughly ten to thirty per cent higher by the late 1870s without abolition; the proposed mechanism of malnourishment, unhygienic conditions and infectious disease; and the finding that cash payments to the Javanese were negatively related to the crude death rate. Peter Boomgaard for Javanese demography generally, for the growth rates of about 1.25 per cent a year in the first half of the nineteenth century accelerating to over 1.5 per cent in the second, and for the attribution of the mortality decline substantially to the smallpox vaccination programme and its divergence from the outer islands. Boomgaard and Gooszen for the benchmark population series. Jan Wisseman Christie for the revisionist doubt about the early nineteenth-century estimates and for the finding that towns of over twenty thousand held less than three per cent of Java's population at the end of the nineteenth century while ninety per cent lived in communities of fewer than five thousand. Clifford Geertz for the involution thesis, presented here as the classic account and **not adopted**, with the subsequent criticism noted. R. E. Elson and Radin Fernando for the revisionist analysis of the famines of the 1840s. Matthias van Rossum and the recent literature on slavery in the Dutch empire for the estimate of six hundred and sixty thousand to something over a million enslaved people transported into VOC territories across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Company's own share of thirty-eight to fifty-four thousand, the flows from Bali and Sulawesi, and the enslaved population of Batavia and its *ommelanden*. Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer, as before, for the European personnel figures.

Contested figures, given as ranges and not resolved. **Java's population is the worst number in this study and no figure is adopted**: Raffles's roughly four and a half million in 1815 against a reconstructed seven and a half million in 1800, against something near thirty million in 1900, with a live argument that the early returns under-counted the countryside badly enough to change the shape of the curve. The Banda figures, the 1740 figures and the Java War figures are given as recorded in the earlier modules and remain unreconciled. The slave-trade estimates are explicitly presented in the literature as ranges awaiting better research, and a recent journalistic synthesis putting the total number of people enslaved under Dutch colonial rule between 1595 and 1914 at over five million — counting generations born into slavery rather than only those trafficked — is **noted here and not used**, since this study has not examined its method.

Three large absences are stated rather than filled. No mortality figures exist in this study for Trunajaya's rebellion and its suppression, for the three Javanese wars of succession, or for the war of 1741–43 — four decades of warfare across the most

densely settled countryside in Southeast Asia, entirely uncounted. No cumulative excess-death figure for the Cultivation System is given, because the quantitative work supports a marginal effect and a counterfactual rate and does not support a total. And no mortality figure is given for the famines of the 1840s.

Two things this module does not establish. The claim that communal tenure with periodic redistribution was in part a colonial artefact is Elson's and is contested; it is used here to illustrate a mechanism and **should not be taken as settled**. And the account of what the Dutch and Javanese of 1870 believed about the antiquity of the regency and the village is drawn from the secondary literature's characterisation rather than from contemporary statements; the *Koloniaal Verslag* series and the administrative handbooks of the period would supply the evidence, and have not been examined.

MODULE 12

The Company Nobody Bought

Module 12 · Convergence and Divergence — three chartered conquests and three endings, the difference a vote makes to what a shareholder becomes, and the strongest case for the defence, stated in full and answered.

Three endings

London, 1858. The East India Company's rule is abolished by statute. Nobody has to invent an authority to do it, because the authority was written into the instrument a hundred and fifty years earlier: in the tripartite indenture of 1708–09 the government's debt to the merged Company stood at £3,200,000, and the monopoly was to run for a stated minimum after which the government might extinguish the exclusive privilege by repaying the debt and giving three years' notice. The Company had bought, on the open market, an asset with a call option attached, and the licensor had held the option from the beginning.

Westminster, 3 July 1899. The House of Commons goes into Committee and votes £865,000 out of the Consolidated Fund to the Royal Niger Company in consideration of the transfer of its administrative powers, its treaty rights and its property — three hundred thousand to redeem the territory's debt, three hundred thousand for unexhausted improvements, a hundred and fifty thousand for land, mineral rights and dislocation of trade, and a hundred and fifteen thousand for plant, plus half of all mineral royalties for ninety-nine years in a block between the Niger and a line from Yola to Zinder. Members complain that they have been given not a scrap of paper and are voting on notes hastily taken. The Government carries it, 223 to 101. On 1 January 1900 the charter lapses.

Amsterdam and The Hague, 1796–1799. The Dutch East India Company is nationalised on 1 March 1796. Its charter is allowed to expire at the end of 1799. There is no vote on a price, no redemption clause to invoke, no negotiation and no purchase. The Company is insolvent — the deficit of some seventy-four million guilders found by the States-General in 1789 having grown, after the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, into debts variously given at between a hundred and two hundred million — and the state takes over its possessions along with its liabilities because there is nobody else to take them.

Two of these are transactions. The third is a receivership.

The clause that was not written

The Landscape of this study, working from the charter of 1602 alone, predicted that this order could not end the way the English one did, and the reason it gave was that the licensor was plural. That prediction can now be closed out.

Look at what the 1602 instrument actually contains. The States-General grants the monopoly for twenty-one years east of the Cape, receives the oath of fidelity of every governor and soldier, confirms their commissions on the return of every fleet, decides deadlocks in the Company's own assembly under Article VI, and takes twenty-five thousand pounds' worth of participation in the enterprise on the day it licenses it. The provincial States, or the town regencies they delegate to, choose the directors from lists the chambers themselves draw under Article XXVI. The six chambers hold the capital and the ships. The participants hold, under Article XVII, a claim on a distribution when five per cent of the returns is in the cash-box.

Nowhere in any of it is there a redemption power with a price. And there could not have been, because a redemption power requires a single body with both the standing to exercise it and the money to pay — and in the Republic the standing and the money sat in different buildings. The States-General could revoke a charter and had no treasury worth the name. The provinces had money and no power over the instrument. The chambers were the Company. The participants had neither.

So when the thing failed, there was no counterparty. Nobody could buy it out, because buying it out would have required an authority that did not exist in Dutch constitutional law.

And the consequence is the largest single divergence this study has found. **The Kingdom of the Netherlands never took a decision to rule Java.** No minister proposed it, no chamber voted on it, no price was set, no debate was held. A trading company that had been chartered to trade went bankrupt, and the state, as the residual party, was left holding an archipelago. Britain decided to take over India in 1858 and paid for the Niger in 1899. The Netherlands acquired the Indies the way a guarantor acquires a debtor's stock.

That is a general instrument and it can be stated as one. **The manner in which a chartered conquest ends is fixed in its charter at the outset, by whether a single licensor holds a stated power of redemption — and where no such licensor exists, the state does not take over the colony so much as inherit it, without a decision and therefore without terms.**

The vote

The second divergence is sharper still, and it corrects a finding this collection had drawn from the English case.

Both companies had tradeable shares. Both had a market that could price them daily. On the usual account of what a liquid apex does — that a proprietor who can sell at any time has no reason to defend an arrangement, and will convert his unease into a sale rather than into political action — the two should have behaved alike.

They behaved as differently as two institutions can.

In London, a holder of £500 of East India stock had a vote in the Court of Proprietors, the general meeting that contemporaries called the Company's little parliament and which could and did overturn its own directors. And Edmund Burke, in the Ninth Report, explained precisely what that did to the character of the holder:

> *"The East India Company is not, like the Bank of England, a mere moneyed society for the sole purpose of the preservation or improvement of their capital... When it is considered that a certain share in the stock gives a share in the government of so vast an empire, with such a boundless patronage, civil, military, marine, commercial, and financial, in every department of which such fortunes have been made as could be made nowhere else, it is impossible not to perceive that capitals far superior to any qualifications appointed to proprietors, or even to Directors, would readily be laid out for a participation in that power. The India proprietor, therefore, will always be, in the first instance, a politician."*

The stock was not held for its yield. It was held because it carried a vote, and the vote carried access to the appointment of the men who would govern a subcontinent — writerships, cadetships, contracts, commands, residencies. Liquid in form and entirely illiquid in motive: a proprietor could sell at any moment and would not, because what he actually held was standing, and there was nowhere else to buy it.

In Amsterdam a participant had no vote, no meeting, no right of inspection and no means of removing anybody. The reckoning promised for 1612 was merged away; the audit petitioned for in 1622 was refused; the books stayed shut for a hundred and ninety-seven years. What he had was a price on the exchange and the ability to act on it in an afternoon.

Set the consequences side by side.

The English Company's conduct became, and remained for a century, the permanent business of English public life — the Regulating Act of 1773, the parliamentary committees, Burke's reports, the impeachment of a Governor-General, a national argument about what was being done in Bengal and in whose name. Not

because Englishmen were more scrupulous than Dutchmen, and not because the English press was freer, though it was. Because there existed in London several thousand people with a legal right to attend a meeting, question directors and vote, whose fortunes depended on the government of India, and who therefore had both the standing and the motive to drag Indian affairs into Parliament.

The Dutch Company's conduct was invisible. Not concealed at every point — the dividends were public, the auctions were public, Coen's despatches were not secret — but unexamined, because no constituency existed with any right to examine. Banda, the clove expeditions, the Javanese wars, the cost of the garrison: none of it was ever put to a meeting, because there was no meeting. Dutch colonial affairs became a parliamentary question only in 1848, and then not because anybody in the Indies forced it but because a constitutional revision made in The Hague for domestic reasons put the colonial accounts in front of a legislature.

So liquidity is not the variable, and this study revises the collection's finding accordingly. The variable is whether the instrument carries governance. A tradeable share that carries a vote produces owners who will not sell, because what they hold is access; and those owners become a political constituency whose quarrels drag the enterprise's conduct into public view. A tradeable share that carries only money produces owners who will sell, and who therefore never become anything at all.

The paradox, once stated, is not a paradox. **Voice is what makes exit unattractive.** Remove the vote and you have not merely weakened the shareholder's attachment to the arrangement — you have removed him from public life, and with him the only body of people who had both the information and the standing to ask what the enterprise was doing.

The chair, and what decides whether there is one

The third comparison closes the question this study opened in its Landscape.

Bengal handed its conqueror an office. The *diwani* was a real Mughal position with a patent, a function, a treasury and a staff, and its authority attached to the position rather than to the man, so that a foreign trading company could obtain a grant of it from an emperor and operate the machinery already attached. Northern Nigeria handed Lugard something similar: the emirates of the Sokoto Caliphate, with their offices, their assessment and their chain of obligation, into which a British Resident could be inserted — and Lugard's first act on inheriting the Royal Niger Company's paper was to send a messenger to the Sultan of Sokoto to say that he held to the Company's promises and had brought money to pay the subsidy when it fell due.

Java handed its conqueror nothing of the kind. Mataram's lords held revocable assignments of other men's labour, granted at a king's pleasure, recorded in no register a stranger could read, renewed by attendance at court and by marriage. There was no patent to obtain and no department whose keys could change hands. What the Company could get was a contract with a person, and it spent a hundred and fifty years getting them, one restoration at a time.

So it built the missing office. By 1755 every man holding any authority in the interior of central Java had to travel to a Dutch port and swear an oath into the hands of a Dutch governor before he might exercise the authority his own sultan had just conferred on him. And it paid for the office in the only currency that would buy it: heritability, which a Javanese king structurally could not sell, because the revocability of his nobles' positions *was* his power.

And the thing that determines which of these a conqueror finds is the previous order's fiscal technology. Where the incumbent assessed a demand in cash on measured ground and kept registers, it necessarily built offices, because a cash assessment cannot be run by personal loyalty — it requires clerks, records and a hierarchy of accountable posts, and a hierarchy of accountable posts is a chair. Where the incumbent assigned households of labour, it built no such thing, because no records were needed: the assignment-holder went and took what he was owed.

The instruction is therefore not to ask whether a conquered order was centralised or sophisticated. Mataram was both. **Ask what it counted in.** Cash and acres produce an enterable office; households and labour-days produce a web of persons; and the conqueror who meets the second must either manufacture an office or govern directly, and manufacturing is very much cheaper.

Where the three converge

Against those divergences, the convergences are almost monotonous, and their monotony is the point: men in the same position, with the same materials, reach the same answers.

All three chartered bodies acquired sovereign powers by an instrument and used them to make treaties with local rulers in the name of a European state. All three ruled through an indigenous aristocracy whose tenure they secured, and whose security was the price of collaboration. All three declined to form the population they ruled, and all three found the money for garrisons while finding none for schools — the revealed-preference test that Northern Nigeria states most brutally, where an administration that paid for four Maxim guns, a war, £865,000 to a chartered company, a Resident in every province, a railway to Kano and a permanent garrison did not pay for schools,

and forbade people who were willing to pay for schools out of their own subscriptions from coming to build them. Where a power spends is what it wants; where it refuses to spend is what it refuses to have.

All three ran a seam split by distance, with a metropolitan account and a colonial reality that the order's central task was keeping apart. All three sorted their extraction by caste, paying each stratum in the currency appropriate to its position. And in all three the ending was decided in Europe: by statute at Westminster in 1858, by a Commons division in 1899, by a bankruptcy in Amsterdam in 1799 and a treaty signed in London in 1814. On no occasion was anybody in the colony asked.

What Java has that the others do not

Four things, and they are the study's contribution.

An extraction that cannot be audited. Bengal's Company took a revenue: a share of a measured thing, assessed on a register, argued over by everybody from the cultivator upward. That is expensive — the assessment machinery is the costliest thing a conqueror buys — and it leaves a record. Java's Company bought an output: so many pikuls delivered at Cirebon, no survey, no assessment, no enquiry into what the regent took. That is cheap, and it generates no record at all of what the arrangement cost the people who produced it. The receiving end is known to within a few hundred million guilders. The paying end has no number, in any unit, and never had one.

A unit that could not be translated. Raffles brought the Bengal instrument to Java in 1813 — a land rent, assessed on measured ground, payable in cash — and it did not take, because there was no survey, no register and very little cash, and because an instrument calibrated to measure ground applied to an order that measured people has to construct its own object before it can tax it. Van den Bosch's solution was to leave the land rent's published rate untouched and change what it was payable in, which is the same move the collection has found in the redefinition of a tax base, applied to the unit of denomination rather than the category of the thing taxed.

Formation running backwards. Every colonial power in this collection withheld formation from the majority. Java is the case where the reversal is visible, and it follows from a structural feature of a trading-post empire: the men arrived without families. A garrison and a factory staffed by single men, in a city where the households were run by Javanese, Balinese, Bugis and Malay women and staffed by purchased slaves, is a machine for producing children whose earliest years are managed entirely by the ruled — and it produced a Dutch elite of Asia that spoke Malay at home, wore the *kebaya*, chewed betel and bathed in a way that scandalised visitors, and that had to be forcibly re-Europeanised in the nineteenth century by newcomers who found it embarrassing.

Where a ruling group declines to form the ruled while depending on them for its domestic life, formation does not stop; it reverses.

And an order that never justified itself to anyone it ruled. This is the most striking thing in the case and it should be stated flatly. The charter of 1602 contains no religion, no mission and no civilising claim; the peoples of Asia appear in it only as the far end of a shipping route. The legal case published in 1609 was dedicated to the princes and free peoples of the Christian world. The church that followed served the Company's own congregations. No school was built for a Javanese child in two and a half centuries. Below the rank of a regent, no Javanese was ever told anything by this order about why it was entitled to what it took.

And it worked, because the demand never came from a Dutchman. It came from a village head, under a district head, under a Javanese lord whose right to command labour was older than the Company and had never been in question. **A demand does not have to be legitimate; the person making it has to be.** This order ran for two hundred and fifty years on a legitimacy it had bought and did not possess, and it was never obliged to acquire one of its own.

The strongest case for the defence

Now the counter-position, and it deserves to be put at its full strength, in the form its best advocates would give it, because a case answered in a weakened form is not answered.

It runs like this.

Consider what the Dutch actually found in Java and what they left. They found an island whose political history was a succession of dynastic wars — Trunajaya, three wars of succession, the partition of a kingdom, armies living off villages in every generation within memory — under a state that raised its forces by assignment, counted its wealth in households because households could be lost, and had itself been built by conquest within the previous century. There was no golden age. Mataram was not a peaceful order that the Dutch disturbed; it was a young conquest state in the middle of consolidating, and the Company's first serious military test came from a Susuhunan whose army was besieging its capital.

And consider the outcome. From 1830 those wars stopped, and for the first time in the recorded history of the island a cultivator was unlikely to have his rice seized by soldiers or his village burned in a quarrel about a succession. The colonial government ran and expanded a smallpox vaccination programme, and the mortality decline of the nineteenth century is attributed by the leading specialist substantially to it — smallpox being a disease that arrived every seven or eight years and killed more reliably than

plague. Roads and irrigation meant that a local harvest failure was no longer automatically a local famine, because rice could be moved. And the population multiplied several times over: on the standard reconstruction, from something like seven and a half million in 1800 to around thirty million a century later.

Those are not decorative achievements. They are the two or three things that actually determine whether ordinary people live or die in an agrarian society, and this order delivered all of them.

Then add the honesty of the ending. The system that this study has spent twelve modules describing was dismantled by Dutchmen, arguing in Dutch, in a Dutch parliament, in the name of Javanese welfare — by a minister of religion who had lived eleven years in Batavia and gave up his position for it, and by a former colonial official who wrote a book that made his country shiver and lived in poverty for the rest of his life. Slavery was abolished in the Indies by law. The compulsory cultivations were abolished crop by crop through the 1860s. No Javanese forced any of this; it was done by the conquerors' own society, arguing with itself, and it was done because the arguments were true and were made.

And the conclusion the defence draws: an accounting that records Banda and the Java War and the cane fields, and does not record the vaccination programme and the end of the succession wars and the men who dismantled the system, is not an accounting. It is a prosecution with the defence table empty.

The answer

Every part of that is true, and this study grants all of it. Here is what it does not establish.

First, on the benefits: they were real, and they were preconditions rather than purposes, and the distinction matters because it tells you what would have happened had the arithmetic changed.

A population is a revenue base. Van den Bosch needed cultivators alive, in place and working; a dead Javanese delivers no coffee, and an island depopulated by dynastic war delivers less than an island at peace. Vaccination, the suppression of the succession wars, and the roads that moved rice were all, in the plainest sense, investments in the productive capacity of the asset. That does not make the benefit unreal — a child who does not die of smallpox is not less alive for having been vaccinated by a government that wanted his labour — but it does mean the benefit was contingent on the arithmetic continuing to point that way.

And this study contains the demonstration of what happened when it did not. The Chinese of Batavia were the most commercially valuable population in the colony,

owning most of the sugar mills and paying more tax than anyone. When the price of sugar halved and they became a surplus rather than an asset, the order deported them, and then killed at least ten thousand of them in a fortnight, and offered a bounty for severed heads. The benevolence and the massacre issue from the same calculation, and the calculation is not a moral commitment. **An order that is good to you because you are profitable has told you exactly what it will do when you stop being profitable, and Java contains both halves of the sentence.**

Second, the same order was killing at the same time, and the two cannot be netted.

The best quantitative work on the period finds that forced-labour demands under the Cultivation System were strongly associated with mortality — that in 1840 total deaths rose by about thirty for every additional thousand workers called up, and that without abolition average mortality in Java would have been roughly ten to thirty per cent higher by the late 1870s. The mechanism was malnourishment and the conditions of the work. So the vaccination programme and the cultivation labour were running simultaneously, in the same residencies, on the same people, one lowering the death rate and the other raising it.

There is no unit in which those can be combined. You cannot subtract a famine from a vaccination programme, and any account that produces a verdict has done so by quietly deciding which column to treat as the real one. The defence is entitled to its column at full strength. It is not entitled to the subtraction.

Third, the counterfactual the defence needs is not available.

"More Javanese lived than would have under Mataram" requires knowing what Mataram would have become, and Mataram in 1619 was not a fixed object. It was a state being actively built — by a ruler who was fighting a war of unification, decreeing a calendar that fused two civilisations, and settling rice villages along a coast for logistical reasons. Whatever it would have become by 1870, nobody can say, and the comparison the defence rests on is not between Dutch Java and Mataram but between Dutch Java and an unknown.

Fourth, on the dismantling: it happened, it was honourable, and it was not the cause.

Van Hoëvell and Multatuli were exactly what the defence says they were, and this study has said so. But the system was already in crisis by the 1840s; the forced cultivations were reduced through the 1860s; and the specialist reading is that its end came about largely through developments in Java rather than in Holland, because a colonial state that had begun weak grew strong enough on the proceeds to stop paying the coalition of regents, officials, tax-farmers and sugar contractors that had made it

work — at the same moment as a new body of Dutch planters and traders, generated by the export boom itself, discovered they were locked out of a business they could run better.

The humanitarian argument was sincere and it supplied the language in which the change could be described and voted for. The votes came from men who wanted the state out of the sugar business. **Both of those are true and the second is the causal one**, and the honest form of the defence's point is not that Dutch conscience ended the system but that Dutch conscience determined what the ending could be *called* — which is not nothing, because what a thing is called determines what can be proposed next.

And finally, the deepest thing the defence cannot have.

An order does not get moral credit for the by-products of its arithmetic. The reason the Cultivation System exists is that the Kingdom of the Netherlands was near insolvency in 1830 after a French occupation, a Javanese war, a Sumatran war and the secession of Belgium, and required a revenue. That is the recorded reason, in the appointment of the man sent to produce it. The vaccination and the roads were what the extraction needed in order to keep extracting.

But the converse holds with equal force, and this is where the prosecution has to stop as well. **The by-products were not thereby unreal.** The people who lived because they were vaccinated were real people who would otherwise be dead, and their being alive is not cancelled by the motive of the government that vaccinated them. A study that grants the cost and denies the achievement is doing exactly what it accuses the defence of doing, in the other direction.

So the accounting closes where it began, with two ledgers that do not meet: an order that took an island by force, held it for two and a half centuries without ever explaining itself to a single person it ruled, killed at Banda and at Batavia and in the cane fields, extracted somewhere between eight hundred million and two and a half billion guilders from a population whose side of the transaction was never written down — and under which more Javanese were alive in 1870 than had ever been alive on that island before. Both entries stand. Neither pays the other.

Reading the case against the framework

Four things this study banks.

First: the manner of a chartered conquest's ending is written into its charter, and where no single licensor holds a stated redemption power, the state inherits the colony rather than acquiring it. England pledged the Company's monopoly against a national debt in 1709 with a price and three years' notice, and abolished it in

1858 as a transaction on agreed terms. It bought the Royal Niger Company out for £865,000 in a Commons division. The Dutch Republic wrote no such clause — could not have, since the power to license, the power to appoint and the money sat in three different bodies — and so the Netherlands became a colonial power in Asia without any organ of the Dutch state ever deciding that it should.

Second, and this revises a finding of the collection: liquidity is not what determines whether an apex defends its arrangement. Voice is. Two chartered companies, both with freely traded shares, both conquering. In one the share carried a vote, the vote carried patronage over a subcontinent, and the holders became — in Burke's word — politicians who would not sell, and whose quarrels made the enterprise's conduct the permanent business of a national legislature. In the other the share carried only a claim on a distribution, and the holders sold, and the enterprise's conduct was not examined by anybody for a hundred and ninety-seven years. **Voice is what makes exit unattractive; remove the vote and you have not weakened the owner's attachment but abolished him as a political being** — and with him the only constituency that had both the standing and the information to ask what was being done.

Third: what determines whether a conquered order offers an enterable office is the unit it counted in. A previous order that assessed a cash demand on measured ground must have built registers, clerks and accountable posts, and those posts are a chair a stranger can sit in. A previous order that assigned households of labour built no such thing, because the assignment-holder went and took what he was owed and nobody had to write anything down. Bengal and Sokoto counted the first way and handed their conquerors a working machine. Java counted the second way and handed its conqueror nothing, so the conqueror manufactured an office — an oath sworn at a Dutch port before a Dutch governor — and paid for it in heritability, which is the one thing the incumbent sovereign structurally could not sell.

Fourth, and this is what the case is finally about: an order can run for two and a half centuries without ever justifying itself to anybody it rules, provided it keeps a legitimate local face at every point where an order is actually given.

This is the finding that surprised the study most, because it contradicts the expectation the whole collection is built on. The framework holds that a floor of force is expensive and that belief is what makes it cheap; that an order which cannot make itself believed in must pay for its quiet in soldiers and surveillance; and that surveillance is the tell of a belief that never took.

Dutch Java never took, and was cheap anyway. It offered the Javanese no story, no schooling, no membership and no reason. Its charter had no religion in it. Its legal case

was addressed to Christendom. Its church served its own people. Its floor was a few thousand sick Germans and the survivors of its own earlier conquests. And it held an island of millions for two hundred and fifty years, through a coffee quota delivered by a regent who had been sold the one thing his own king could not give him.

The resolution is that legitimacy is required at the point of demand, not at the top of the chain. The cultivator was not asked to believe anything about the Netherlands. He was asked, by a Javanese, in Javanese, in the speech level he had used to superiors since he was three, to do a thing Javanese cultivators had always done for the men set over them. The belief that made the arrangement cheap was a belief in a Javanese lord, formed in a Javanese childhood, funded by tax-free village land the Javanese state had endowed centuries before the first Dutch ship rounded the Cape.

So the Company did not run on borrowed force. It ran on **borrowed belief** — a formation it had not built, could not have built, made no attempt to build, and did not understand. That is the cheapest conquest available, and its price is exactly the one this study has documented at every stage: an order in that position cannot see. It cannot measure what it takes, because it does not do the taking. It cannot read its own danger, because the resentment it generates is aimed at its intermediaries. And it cannot know what is being installed in the children of the country it governs, because it is not in the room — which is why, in July 1825, a road survey walked into an estate where a great-grandmother had spent ten years forming a boy on the Indic epics and the ideal Islamic ordering of power, and nobody in the party had the faintest idea what they were walking through.

A note on sources.

The primary quotation in this module is drawn from earlier work in this collection and from the sources cited in the preceding modules; no new archival material has been consulted.

Burke's passage on the India proprietor — that the East India Company is not a mere moneyed society, that a share in the stock gives a share in the government of an empire with a boundless patronage, and that the India proprietor will therefore always be in the first instance a politician — is from the Ninth Report of the Select Committee, as quoted and sourced in this collection's study of the Company in Bengal, together with the account of the tripartite indenture of 1708–09, the £3,200,000 debt, the redemption on repayment plus three years' notice, and the constitution of the Court of Proprietors and its franchise. The Royal Niger Company figures — the £865,000 broken into its four heads, the Yola–Zinder mineral line and the ninety-nine-year royalty share, the division of 223 to 101, Lugard's message to the Sultan of Sokoto,

and the revealed-preference observation about guns and schools — are from this collection's study of British Northern Nigeria, which sources them to the Commons Committee debate of 3 July 1899 in Hansard. The provisions of the *octrooi* of 1602 are as quoted in this study's Landscape, from Valentijn's 1724 text, with the caveats recorded there.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited as in the preceding modules: R. E. Elson and Cornelis Fasseur for the dissolution of the Cultivation System's coalition; Peter Boomgaard for Javanese demography and the smallpox vaccination programme; de Zwart, Gallardo-Albarrán and Rijpma for the association between forced-labour demands and mortality and for the counterfactual on the mortality rate; M. C. Ricklefs, Peter Carey, Jean Gelman Taylor, Soemarsaid Moertono, Matthias van Rossum and the others named in the modules where their findings are used.

No new contested figure is introduced here. The ranges given previously stand and are not narrowed: Java's population, the VOC's debt at dissolution, the transfers to the Netherlands, the Banda and 1740 and Java War casualties, and the absence of any mortality figures at all for Trunajaya's rebellion, the three Javanese wars of succession and the war of 1741–43.

Three claims in this module are comparative inferences rather than demonstrated findings and are flagged as such. That the absence of a redemption clause in the Dutch charter was a consequence of the licensor's plurality is an argument from the structure of the 1602 instrument and from Dutch constitutional arrangements; **no contemporary statement has been found in which anybody noticed the omission or explained it.** That the shareholder's vote is what made the English Company's conduct a public question, and its absence what kept the Dutch Company's private, is drawn from Burke's analysis on one side and from the documented silence on the other; it would be strengthened or refuted by work on whether Dutch participants ever attempted collective political action beyond the remonstrance of 1609 and the petition of 1622, which this study has not undertaken. And the proposition that a previous order's unit of account determines whether it leaves an enterable office is generalised here from three cases — Mughal Bengal, the Sokoto Caliphate and Mataram — which is enough to state a hypothesis and not enough to establish one.

Finally, the largest outstanding work on this case is stated plainly for whoever takes it up. **No Javanese-language source has been read in the original for any module of this study.** The *Babad Diponegoro*, the *Serat Centhini*, the court chronicles of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, and the *serat* literature generally are the places where the questions this study could not answer — what the regents thought they were doing,

what was said in the villages in the Company's name, what a Javanese of 1750 believed about the men in the castle at Batavia — would be answered, and every conclusion here about Javanese motive is an inference from structure and from Dutch records until somebody reads them.